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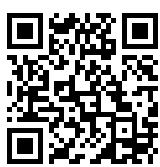

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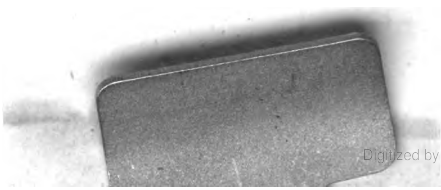

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SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AND NOW PUBLISHED IN TWO VOLUMES,

WITH

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS.

BY

JOHN EVELEIGH, D. D.

PROVOST OF ORIEL COLLEGE, AND PREBENDARY OF ROCHESTER.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE eight firſt Sermons of this Volume were preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1792, at a time when the moſt zealous attempts were making in our own country, no leſs than throughout the Continent of Europe, to ſubvert all the great principles of Chriſtianity; and before the appearance of Dr. Paley's "Evidences," and conſequently of all the ſubſequent defences of the Chriſtian Religion, which were ſo triumphantly enforced by different Members of our Church.

The Four remaining Sermons of it are employed on Doctrinal and Critical Subjects, being deſigned—to deduce regularly from Scripture the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity—to defend our Bible Tranſlation of certain moſt important Texts of Zechariah concerning this Doctrine —and laſtly, to propoſe ſome corrections of this Tranſlation in the 87th Pſalm.

Such

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Such however is the ſubject of them; that it cannot but be ſuited, at all times, to Students in Theology, and eſpecially to the junior Members of the Univerſity.

*** The Bampton Lectures contained in this volume are publiſhed alſo in a ſeparate volume for the benefit more eſpecially of the junior Members of the Univerſity.

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Theſe Sermons, being intended to exhibit conjointly a general View and Vindication of Chriſtianity, as profeſſed by our Church, have all, on that account, the ſame text prefixed to them, namely, 1 PET. iii. 15.

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1 PET. iii. 15.

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ZECH. ii. 8—11.

For thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts; After the glory hath he ſent me unto the nations which ſpoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

For, behold, I will ſhake mine hand upon them, and they ſhall be a ſpoil to their ſervants: and ye ſhall know that the Lord of hoſts hath ſent me.

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the Lord.

And many nations ſhall be joined to the Lord in that day, and ſhall be my people: and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that the Lord of hoſts hath ſent me unto thee.

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Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

As well the ſingers as the players on inſtruments ſhall be there: all my ſprings are in thee.

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SERMON I.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

IT is a diſtinguiſhing property of Chriſtianity, that it not only admits of a rational inquiry into its truth, but alſo incites its profeſſors to this inquiry in the moſt forcible manner, making it a part of their religious duty. We are commanded in the text "to be ready al-"ways to give an anſwer to every man, that "aſketh us a reaſon of the Hope that is in "us:" or, in other words, we are commanded to ſatisfy ourſelves univerſally of the truth of our Religion, ſo as to be prepared on all occaſions to aſſign our reaſons for believing in it.

Our Religion may be conſidered with regard to its ſubſtance, with regard to its hiſtory, with regard to the arguments by which it is con-

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firmed, and with regard to the objections by which it is oppoſed. Theſe four great topics include the principal circumſtances which affect our Chriſtian Faith: under them we have ample means of ſatisfying both ourſelves and others concerning the Hope that is in us.

And many are the reaſons, which ought to induce us, on occaſions like the preſent, to prepare ourſelves by a general diſcuſſion of theſe great topics to comply with the command of the text.

In an age when the real ſubſtance of our Religion is miſrepreſented by men of the moſt oppoſite characters and intentions;—when the manner, in which it has been received and conveyed down to us, is traduced by the moſt inſidious and unſupported inſinuations;—when the arguments in its defence are ſtudiouſly diſjoined from each other, and frittered away by ſucceſſive detractions of many of their moſt convincing parts;—and when the whole body of old objections againſt it is recalled, and enforced by new ones which are every day ſuggeſted by an adventurous and ſceptical philoſophy;—in ſuch an age it is conſpicuouſly our duty to fortify our minds by a view of the information, comprehended under the general topics of Chriſtian Theology which I have above enumerated.

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Diſcourſes alſo on ſuch general topics may well be interſperſed among others on the particular parts of our religious profeſſion, which the founder of this Lecture has wiſely marked out, as ſubjects for our diſcuſſion. Thus interſperſed, they will conduce, on an extended ſcale, to ſimilar good purpoſes with thoſe reflections at large on any human ſcience; which, in the progreſs of diſquiſitions on particular branches of it, ſuggeſt to us from time to time ſuch conceptions of the whole, as are found to be eſſential to a full comprehenſion of the inſtructions which are communicated even on its moſt detached and minute diviſions.

Such general information moreover cannot fail of being peculiarly ſerviceable to the younger part of my audience, for whoſe benefit this Inſtitution was more immediately calculated. Since without it early improvements in religious ſcience will be ſo deſultory and imperfect, as to afford little reaſon to expect, either that Theological ſtudents will be furniſhed with that connected knowledge of the different parts of their Religion, which may qualify them in future life to teach others with advantage; or that young and unexperienced minds will themſelves be effectually guarded againſt that moſt extenſive ſpecies of infidelity, which is founded on

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[a]ignorance of the general nature and circumſtances of our Religion, and is conſtantly betraying itſelf by inſignificant and impertinent objections againſt its truth, and by the ſenſeleſs blaſphemy which ſo often ſhocks the ears of good men in private converſation.

Truth indeed has on all occaſions ſo much force, that, when clearly propoſed, it muſt command attention and reſpect: but the truths of Chriſtianity are farther ſo admirably calculated to ſatisfy the hopes of the beſt men and to allay the penitential fears of the worſt, that, wherever they are early and ſyſtematically underſtood, prejudice, inſtead of exerting itſelf againſt them, muſt cooperate with reaſon in their favour, and ſecure for them ſuch influence on an uncorrupted heart as the oppoſition of ignorance will in vain attempt to deſtroy.

Since then a general diſcuſſion of the great topics, under which I have diſtributed the conſideration of our Religion, and which are ſo comprehenſive as to enable us to comply with the command of the text, is well ſuited

[a] "From the ſeveral converſations, which it has been "my chance to have with unbelievers, I have learned that "ignorance of the nature of our Religion, and a diſin-"clination to ſtudy both it and its evidences, are to be "reckoned among the chief cauſes of infidelity." Beattie's Evidences, vol. i. p. 6.

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to the preſent times,—is extenſively uſeful at proper intervals amidſt the particular ſubjects preſcribed for this Lecture,—and is likely to be of peculiar ſervice to the younger part of my audience;—I ſhall confine myſelf to it in the following diſcourſes, and, without any apology for calling your attention to truths of which you muſt often before have heard the greater part, or any more extended introduction, I ſhall propoſe it as my deſign to ſtate compendiouſly, what Chriſtianity is, what the manner in which it has been received and conveyed down to us, what the arguments by which its truth is defended, and what the objections with which it is aſſailed.

Or, to propoſe my deſign with its particular comprehenſion and limitations, I ſhall endeavour,—Firſt, to ſtate in hiſtorical order the ſubſtance of our Religion, as it extends from the moſt remote circumſtance any where revealed in Scripture to the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt;—Secondly, to give a ſketch of the hiſtory of our religion from this publication of the Goſpel to the preſent times; confining however this ſketch, towards the concluſion, to the particular hiſtory of our own Church;—Thirdly, to ſtate in a ſummary manner the arguments in general which are adducible in proof of the truth of Chriſtianity;—And Fourthly, to point out

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the general ſources of objection againſt it, and to ſhew that a forcible removal of theſe offences by divine interpoſition would be inconſiſtent with the doctrines themſelves of Revelation; concluding the whole with a particular account of thoſe objections which are advanced againſt Chriſtianity from the pretenſions of philoſophy.

To begin then with ſtating in hiſtorical order the ſubſtance of our Religion, as it extends from the moſt remote circumſtance any where revealed in Scripture to the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt:— The declarations of Scripture, which form the ſubſtance of our Religion, aſcend to the remoteſt ſubject from which it is poſſible that any information ſhould commence: they inform us, that from [c] everlaſting, from a duration which numbers have no powers to expreſs and the mind of man no faculties to comprehend, was God: that he is a [d] Spirit, is [e] poſſeſſed of life in himſelf, and is infinite in perfection, but incomprehenſible in his nature; and moreover,

[c] Pſ. xc. 2. [d] John iv. 24.

[e] "Jehovah" and "I am," the appropriate names of God in Scripture, are immediately derived from his inherent life. And by an oath, referring to this diſtinguiſhing property of the Godhead, the Almighty was often pleaſed to confirm his promiſes: "As I live, ſaith the Lord." Num. xiv. 21. Rom. xiv. 11.

that

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that through his own free goodneſs he originally created, and continually preſerves, whatever elſe beſides himſelf has exiſtence both in heaven and in earth.

The firſt intelligent beings, created by him, are ſometimes in Scripture called Spirits from the refined conſtitution of their nature; at other times they are called Angels from their miniſtration in the divine economy. Various are the [f] paſſages of holy writ, which aſſure us that they were created upright; whilſt at the ſame time the fall of ſome among them moſt unhappily demonſtrates, that they were created alſo free agents and capable of ſin. Why they ſhould be permitted thus to fall, and why when fallen they ſhould afterwards be permitted to tempt other creatures to involve themſelves in a ſimilar fate, are circumſtances left among the ſecret things of God.

Nor leſs unreſolved by Revelation are the queſtions, "whether any part of matter were cre-
" ated at ſo early a period as the firſt intelligent
" creatures; and whether thoſe creatures were
" clothed with material bodies?" Revelation, while it draws arguments for our inſtruction from the conduct, condition, and agency of ſuperior beings, informs us indeed concerning particular circumſtances of angelic hiſtory;

[f] John viii. 44. Jude 6.

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but, to the utter diſappointment of vain curioſity, it ſays nothing profeſſedly with regard to this hiſtory.

Deſtined for human uſe, it confines itſelf to human concerns. After a full, but indefinite, aſſertion, that [g] "in the beginning God "created the heaven and the earth," it confines its profeſſed information concerning the material creation to ſuch circumſtances, as particularly relate to man and the ſyſtem which he inhabits: inſtructing us, that all the various objects, which we perceive and admire around us, were originally produced and have ſince been preſerved by the all-perfect God; and alſo, that, among the productions of the material world, this all-perfect Being, having formed man's body from the duſt of the earth, was pleaſed in a diſtinguiſhing manner to breathe into his noſtrils the breath of life. Thus animated with a ſpirit of heavenly extraction, man was ſaid to be formed in the Image of God, was conſtituted ſovereign of this lower world and was inveſted with the good things of it.

At the ſame time to prove his grateful obedience under theſe bleſſings, and to fit him, as [h] hath been inferred, for greater in another and

[g] Gen. i. 1.

[h] See Biſhop Bull concerning the firſt covenant and the ſtate of man before the fall, in the third volume of his Sermons and Diſcourſes, 8vo. p. 1079, 1091, &c.

eternal

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eternal ſtate, conditions of trial were impoſed upon him. Like the angels, man was created upright and a free agent. By the wiſdom of God obedience to a poſitive precept was enjoined him; and by the ſame wiſdom the fallen angels were permitted to ſuggeſt temptations to the contrary. His own choice led him to diſobedience, and to death, the predicted conſequence. And this conſequence, it might be feared, would contain under it not merely a privation of animal-life here, called temporal death; but, as in the regular courſe of things muſt be expected to follow from the guilt of free and corrupted agents, that privation alſo of the enjoyments of eternal life hereafter, which is called the ſecond or eternal death.

But, the univerſal progenitor of mankind having thus fallen through the temptation of ſuperior and malicious beings, and having entailed upon his poſterity a depraved and infirm nature; man was not left doomed to thoſe endleſs evils which may be dreaded as the unavoidable puniſhment of voluntary and unexpiated ſin. His great Creator graciouſly and immediately interpoſed to provide a remedy for his fall.

So much alſo did it coſt to redeem his ſoul, that the price muſt aſtoniſh every rational creature.

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creature. The [i]eternal Son of God (whoſe co-exiſtence in nature with the Father forms part of the incomprehenſibility of the Godhead) was in proceſs of time to take upon him the nature of man. In that nature, united with his own in the ſame Perſon, he was to give mankind ſupernatural [k]inſtruction, and, by his meritorious ſufferings even unto death, he was alſo to make [l]atonement for them, and provide moſt extenſive means for their deliverance from thoſe dreadful conſequences of their corruption which threatened to involve them in death eternal; with means, [m]as extenſive as the influence of the firſt man's fall. "As by "one man's diſobedience [n]many were made

[i] Iſaiah ix. 6. Zech. xiii. 7. Rom. viii. 32. Heb. ii. 16.

[k] Deut. xviii. 18. Even the Samaritans appear to have been fully convinced, that, when the Meſſiah came, "he "ſhould tell them all things." John iv. 25.

[l] See, concerning the atonement made for us, Acts xx. 28. Rev. i. 5. Rom. iii. 23—26, and the whole of the 53d chapter of Iſaiah, and of the 9th and 10th chapters of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews.

[m] "God promiſed our firſt parents immediately upon "the fall that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the "ſerpent's head: and by virtue of this Promiſe all truly "good men were ſaved by Chriſt from the beginning." Sherlock on Providence, p. 225, 226.

[n] Rom. v. 19—"οἱ πολλοὶ" in both parts of this verſe ought to be rendered "the many" or "mankind in ge-"neral."

ſinners,

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" ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one many " were to be made righteous:" " Chriſt was " to taſte death for [o] every man:" " He was " to give himſelf a ranſom," or propitiatory ſacrifice, " for [p] all."

It is not however declared in Scripture to be neceſſary that all men ſhould be made acquainted with the circumſtances of this Redemption to qualify them for a participation of its bleſſings. Millions have partaken of corruption through Adam in different ages and degrees, without knowing the ſource of their corruption. And millions may partake of Redemption through Chriſt in equally different ages and degrees, notwithſtanding their [q] ignorance of him in this life. God, we are [r] expreſsly told, is " the Saviour of all men;" though, as we are told at the ſame time, he is ſo " eſpecially of thoſe that believe."

Theſe merciful deſigns indeed were not all revealed at once to any body of men: they are collected from different parts of Scripture and from the completion of the whole. The intimation of a redemption, which was given to the original tranſgreſſors, was ſufficient to encourage hope; and more appears not to have been intended by it.

[o] Heb. ii. 9. [p] 1 Tim. ii. 6.
[q] See Butler's Analogy, note, p. 296, 8vo. edit.
[r] 1 Tim. iv. 10.

But,

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But, from the declaration that [s]the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head to the triumphant aſcenſion of the Prince of life, the ſame merciful deſigns were purſued with an uniform direction to their great and final completion. Indeed we find on this occaſion ſo uniform and wonderful a whole, that infidelity might be tempted to ſuſpect ſome preconcerted plan of human contrivance; were it not that many of the [t]inſpired penmen appear not to have underſtood their own predictions on the ſubject, and much leſs to have had a connected knowledge of the different parts of the edifice which they were contributing to erect.

At the ſame time, whatever deliverance from future evil might be deſigned for man, no ſooner had he forfeited his innocence, than he was reduced by the wiſdom of his Creator to a ſtate of [u]laborious activity, well calculated for ſinful creatures. In this ſtate he was left amidſt toil and pain to ward off for a ſeaſon temporal death; and by his virtue, here to be exerciſed in various trials, hereafter to be accepted through his great Redeemer, he was left

[s] Gen iii. 15.

[t] Dan. xii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. See on this ſubject Burgh's Scripture Confutation, 2d edit. 8vo. p. 33, 34.

[u] Gen. iii. 19.

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to ſecure for himſelf an inheritance in life eternal.

The various parts of the material world, the various operations of the human mind, were thenceforth to ſuggeſt to him, according to the determination of his own free will, means of purification or of farther debaſement. General [x]hopes of Redemption and general [y]rules of conduct were given to him, and without doubt general aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, (that third Perſon in the incomprehenſible Godhead, whoſe operations were from the beginning to be among the principal means provided for man's recovery,) was [z]given alſo, to effect in honeſt minds an acceptable obedience.

But the depravity of man's heart ſoon became deſtructive of his virtue. His deſcendants increaſed and their vices alſo increaſed. Neither the laws of conſcience nor the more expreſs commands of the Deity were effectual to reſtrain their headſtrong paſſions. Every [a]imagination of their heart was evil: and violence overſpread the face of the whole earth. To no effect was Enoch, who had walked with God, tranſlated to the regions of heavenly bliſs with a deſign to convince his brethren that

[x] Gen. iii. 15.
[y] Gen. iv. 7.
[z] Gen. vi. 3. Pſ. li. 12.
[a] Gen. vi. 5.

the

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the road to happineſs in a better world was ſtill open to religious obedience. To no effect was Noah raiſed up to be a preacher of righteouſneſs, and a [b] time limited for the reformation or deſtruction of mankind. So great and ſo general was the vengeance which their profligacy called down upon them, that all the inhabitants of the earth, ſave eight perſons, were ſwept away by an univerſal deluge.

But the promiſes of God concerning the Redemption of man were unalterable. Heaven and earth might paſs away, but his word could not paſs away.

Immediately after this fatal event the Almighty [c] ſmelled a ſweet ſavour from that ſacrifice, which had been inſtituted as a type of the great Redeemer, and determined that he would not any more ſmite every living thing: moreover he was graciouſly pleaſed to provide mankind with [d] new laws for their direction. To theſe laws we may refer both the foundation of the different Religions profeſſed in the Heathen world, and the articles of Faith preſcribed to the Jewiſh Proſelytes of the Gate.

Theſe laws however were not the only means which appear to have been graciouſly uſed by the Almighty to hinder the future corruption

[b] Gen. vi. 3. [c] Gen. viii. 21. [d] Gen. ix.

of

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of mankind. He immediately ſhortened the lives of Noah's deſcendants, with a merciful intention, as we may conclude, to render them more obedient and ſooner to remove pernicious examples from the earth. And, on the preſumptuous erection of the tower of Babel, the ſame great moral Governor interfered in a more conſpicuous manner to reſtrain the licentiouſneſs of thoſe upon whom he had promiſed not to inflict a ſecond general deſtruction: he diſtributed them into [e] ſeparate nations by a confuſion of tongues; thus guarding againſt an uniformity of corruption among them, and providing, in the ordinary courſe of his moral government, means to puniſh their wickedneſs by the inſtrumentality of each other.

But, notwithſtanding theſe divine injunctions and interpoſitions, ſoon did the depravity of the human heart again widely extend its influence: ſoon did the deſcendants of Noah, from imperfect obſervations and groundleſs conjectures concerning the motions and natures of the [f] heavenly bodies, form for themſelves, firſt perhaps, (under the traditions which they might recollect, or under the in-

[e] Gen. xi. 8.

[f] Of what ſort the original corruption of divine worſhip was, we may infer from Acts vii. 42, 43.

fluence

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fluence of what their own [g]unworthineſs might ſuggeſt concerning the neceſſity of a mediator,) a race of tutelar gods or interceſſors with the moſt High; and afterwards, as their [h]corruptions increaſed, [i]Gods of a ſupreme and independent nature.

That mankind therefore, forgetful of the commands enjoined to Noah and his poſterity, might not be involved a ſecond time in an univerſal alienation from the living God; and alſo that they might not be unprepared to receive the promiſed Redemption; it pleaſed the Almighty to ſelect [k]one from the faithful then left, to impart to him a particular knowledge

[g] Secker's Lectures, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 145.

[h] We ſhall eaſily conceive to what degree religious traditions may be corrupted from the following remarkable fact; "Some Saxon Monks, who had formerly introduced "the Goſpel into Rugia, dedicated a Church there to their "patron St. Vitus. The inhabitants afterwards relapſed "into Paganiſm, forgot the true God, and, when they "were converted again about the year 1170, they were "found to be given up to the worſhip of the idol Suan-"tovit which they had derived from "St. Vitus." Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. v. p. 232. 1ſt edit.

[i] What Mr. Hume aſſerts in his natural hiſtory of Religion, to prove that Polytheiſm was the primary Religion of mankind, has the ſame kind of foundation with thoſe political ſyſtems, which admit of no original communications from the Deity, and derive all government from the free and uninfluenced choice of the People.

[k] Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3.

of

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of his duty, and, by confining the Redeemer to his [l]deſcendants, to intereſt them more immediately in the preſervation and publication of thoſe prophecies concerning this great Perſonage which were to be entruſted to their care.

Thus, that the ſervice of the living God might not be left without advocates among men, ſome true worſhippers were at different times, by traditions derived from them and miracles wrought among them, to convey [m]inſtruction to the idolatrous Heathen, and occaſionally to diſpel their groſs darkneſs even before the Day-ſpring from on high ſhould viſit them. And that there might be ſome guardians worthy to be entruſted with the ſacred [n]oracles, ſome country fitted to receive the [o]Sun of righteouſneſs, it was ordained that there ſhould be "a [p]choſen generation, a royal "prieſthood, an holy nation."

Such were the important deſigns of the [q]Jewiſh diſpenſation.

[l] Gen. xxii. 18.

[m] See Jenkin's Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, vol. i. p. 73, &c.

[n] Rom. iii. 2. [o] Mal. iv. 2.

[p] 1 Pet. ii. 9. Exod. xix. 5, 6.

[q] The term "Jew," which is the appropriate denomination of the deſcendants of Judah, ſoon included under it the Benjamites, who joined themſelves to the tribe of Judah on the revolt of the other ten tribes from the houſe

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The promiſes made to the poſterity of Abraham, through Iſaac and Jacob, and the miracles wrought in their preſervation, increaſe, and deliverance from Egyptian bondage, are every where urged as arguments againſt idolatry and types of univerſal Redemption. After this deliverance, as if occaſional interpoſitions were inadequate to his gracious purpoſes, the Deity vouchſafed by a continuation of miracles to take immediately upon himſelf their temporal government.

Nor can the human mind conceive a ſcene more awful, or more impreſſive of religious obedience, than that which uſhered in the laws and ordinances of this new Kingdom. While the viſible interpoſition of the divine Majeſty conferred on it a ſolemnity and dignity, which no [r] language but that of Inſpi-

of David. After the Babyloniſh captivity, when many individuals of theſe ten tribes returned with the men of Judah and Benjamin to rebuild Jeruſalem, the ſame term was made to include them alſo. From hence not only all the Iſraelites of future times have been called Jews; but farther all the deſcendants of Jacob are ſo called by us at preſent from the very beginning of their hiſtory; and we ſpeak even of their original diſpenſation, as the Jewiſh diſpenſation.

[r] Some of the moſt beautiful and ſublime paſſages of ſacred poetry conſiſt of alluſions to the wonderful ſcene which was exhibited on mount Sinai. See Lowth de ſacra Poeſi Heb. 3d edit. p. 113.

ration

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ration can deſcribe; the [s]public diſplay of this wonderful condeſcenſion was calculated to preclude all poſſible ſuſpicion of impoſture, and to convey the moſt durable inſtruction to poſterity.

At the ſame time the precaution alſo, with which the divine commands were delivered, ſerved to prove their great and laſting importance. For, to prevent, as much as poſſible, that intermixture of human error which might ariſe from the contracted duration of men's lives, the Moſaical inſtructions were not, like former Revelations, left to the conveyance of tradition, but [t]written and engraven by the finger of God.

Well are they worthy of our attention on account of their excellent morality; but we ought particularly to obſerve the manner, in which they are calculated to conſecrate a peculiar people to the ſervice of the true God, by the prohibition of intercourſe and intermarriage between them and their idolatrous neighbours, (that fatal cauſe of the corruption of the old world, when the [u]ſons of God went in to the daughters of men,) and by numberleſs precepts, which were deſigned to create

[s] See Exod. xix.—.
[t] Exod. xxxi. 18. Ib. xxxii. 16.
[u] Gen. vi. 2.

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in them a ſettled abhorrence of the [x] advocates for Heathen ſuperſtition, and which to ſome refined moraliſts ſavour too little of univerſal charity. How effectually theſe injunctions operated, under the immediate appointment of the Almighty, to form the Jews into a ſeparate body from the reſt of mankind, is exceedingly remarkable. To this very day, like the well-cemented ruins of ſome old fortreſs, they exhibit proofs of the moſt durable contexture; and, however their original uſe be ſuperſeded, adhere together with undiminiſhed force.

[x] That the Jewiſh laws are ſingularly favourable to ſtrangers, as ſuch, is abundantly evident from Lev. xix. 34.—xxiii. 22.—xxiv. 22.—xxv. 35.—Num. xv. 15, 16.—Deut. i. 16.—x. 17—19.—xxiv. 14—17.—xxvii. 19. Had Mr. Gibbon been acquainted with theſe and many other ſuch parts of the Jewiſh law, he would not have aſſerted in the moſt unqualified manner, on account of ſome puniſhments ſaid to be inflicted in the Old Teſtament, the reaſons of which he perhaps did not underſtand, "that the "moral attributes of Jehovah may not eaſily be reconciled "with the ſtandard of *human* virtue." Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. v. p. 202. But, whatever ſuch men may preſume to aſſert, we know, on the authority of one wiſer and better acquainted with the ſubject, "that no nation had ſtatutes and judgments "ſo righteous as all the law which was ſet before the "Jews." Deut. iv. 8. And, whatever might have happened on particular occaſions and for particular reaſons, we are aſſured in general with regard to the princes of the houſe

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Nor did it contribute in an ordinary degree to promote the great ends of the Moſaical diſpenſation, that the rewards and puniſhments of it were immediately diſtributed; and that the Jews were left to diſcover, by [y]other means, the doctrine of a future ſtate. For how could this people be ſo ſtrongly guarded againſt the temptations to idolatry which were ever ſoliciting their ſenſes from preſent objects, as by the contrary aſſurance of preſent gratifications? Or by what other ſo effectual a method could they be made to look forward with intereſted confidence to ſuperior bleſſings from that great Prophet, whom Moſes himſelf [z]commands them to obey?—Under ſuch influence if the Law did not, by its ſpiritual deſign, as a [a]ſchool-maſter bring them to Chriſt; their zealous attention from temporal motives to every particular relative

houſe of Iſrael from the confeſſion of their enemies that they were merciful kings. See 1 Kings xx. 31.

[y] With regard to the doctrine of a future ſtate, both the Jews and the Gentiles appear univerſally to have derived traditional information on this important ſubject from ſome original Revelation, communicated to mankind in the early ages of their hiſtory: that however of the Jews continued very much more pure in conſequence of the inſtruction, conveyed to them by the deſcriptions of God and the promiſes of Redemption which are every where found in their Scriptures.

[z] Deut. xviii. 15—19. [a] Gal. iii. 24.

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to him would make them inſtruments of univerſal ſalvation.

Excluſively indeed of ſuch conſiderations, had the Moſaical covenant propoſed to its partakers future and eternal rewards without full information that theſe were not to be obtained through works of the Law, unleſs ſanctified by Faith in their promiſed Redeemer; it would apparently have ſuperſeded the neceſſity of this Redeemer. And ſince the Divine Mercy did not think fit to propoſe explicitly the conditions of our eternal life before the great ſacrifice for ſin had been actually offered; we cannot enough admire the wiſdom, by which the neceſſary temporality of the Moſaical ſanctions was employed to prepare the way for a better covenant.

At the ſame time that the promiſed deſcent of the Redeemer might not loſe of its influence by being common to too many, it is very remarkable how it is limited: firſt to [a]Iſaac, then to [b]Jacob, then to [c]Judah, and afterwards to [d]David and his poſterity. Nor was it thus limited without ſome concomitant and immediate token of divine favour. Each of theſe patriarchs was ſoon diſtinguiſhed by his riches and power.

[a] Gen. xxi. 12. Heb. xi. 18.
[b] Gen. xxxv. 12. Mal. i. 2, 3.
[c] Gen. xlix. 12. [d] Acts ii. 30.

Care

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Care having been thus taken to preſerve in ſome part of the world the knowledge of the true God, and to prepare a ſacred repoſitory for the prophecies, which were not only to authenticate the Redeemer on his arrival, but alſo to prepare mankind for his reception; we every where find theſe reaſons of the Jewiſh diſpenſation inſiſted upon and enforced. It was not for their own virtue that the Jews were made particular objects of divine care; but becauſe Jehovah loved their forefathers, who amidſt an idolatrous generation had remained uncorrupted; and for the glory of his name, to be diſplayed in the univerſal Redemption of mankind.

[e]This their great Lawgiver and their prophets fully declare, while they upbraid the Jews with unworthineſs of divine favour. And though the hiſtory of this people for many ages immediately after the promulgation of their law is one continued relation of perverſe obſtinacy and diſobedience; yet the merciful Providence of God abandoned not theſe rebellious children, but at different times raiſed up holy prophets to reprove them, and almoſt to force them back to their duty.—So much was the univerſal and eternal intereſt of

[e] Compare Deut. ix. 7. with Deut. x. 15, 16. And ſee the 48th and 49th chapters of Iſaiah.

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mankind concerned in the preſervation of that ſeed, through which all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed!

And while by alluring promiſes every day fulfilled before their eyes, by grievous threats, and even by the ſevereſt temporal puniſhments, they were reduced at [f]length to ſome partial obedience; the great work of man's ſalvation was accelerated. Thoſe prophets, who denounced, through the Holy Spirit, the moſt oppreſſive bondage on this rebellious nation, foretold alſo with increaſing clearneſs, through the ſame Spirit, the future deliverance of mankind and the eternal bleſſings of Meſſiah's Kingdom.

Nor is the preciſion, with which they pointed out the great Saviour, unworthy of the moſt particular attention. Almoſt every circumſtance relative to him was marked out with minute detail.

His miraculous [g]conception; his birth, with the particular [h]time and [i]place of it; the [k]obſcurity of his outward appearance; his [l]faſting during forty days; the [m]ſpotleſs purity of his life; the [n]greatneſs of his miracles; his [o]tri-

[f] The Jews were never guilty of idolatry after the Babyloniſh captivity.

[g] Iſ. vii. 14. [h] Dan. ix. 25. [i] Mic. v. 2.
[k] Iſ. liii. 2. [l] Prefigured by Moſes and Elijah.
[m] Iſ. liii. 9, 11. [n] Iſ. xxxv. 5, 6. [o] Zech. ix. 9.

umphant,

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umphant, though humble, entry into Jeruſalem; his being [p] betrayed for thirty pieces of ſilver; his execution with common [q] malefactors; his [r] patience under all manner of inſult and torture previous to his propitiatory death, while his back was given to the ſmiters, his [t] hands and feet were pierced, and the parching thirſt occaſioned by his agony could procure no other aſſuaging potion than [u] vinegar mingled with gall; his making of his grave [w] with the rich; his [x] reſurrection on the third day; his [y] triumphant aſcenſion; and the [z] flocking together of the Gentiles to his enſign; all theſe and many more circumſtances, relative to him, were prefigured and foretold with a preciſion eminently characteriſtical of Omniſcience.

Perverſe and invincible muſt the ſcepticiſm be, which remains uninfluenced by it in any ſituation. No wonder therefore that it ſhould have left without the poſſibility of excuſe that obſtinacy which refuſed aſſent to this prophetic evidence, when it was afterwards drawn together and preſented by the Apoſtles to the Jewiſh nation, with a diſplay of miracles correſpondent to thoſe of the great Redeemer

[p] Zech. xi. 12. [q] Iſ. liii. 12. [r] Iſ. liii. 7.
[s] Iſ. l. 6. [t] Pſ. xxii. 16. [u] Iſ. lxix. 21.
[w] Iſ. liii. 9. [x] Jonah ii. 10. [y] Pſ. xxiv.
[z] Iſ. lx. 3, &c.

himſelf,

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himſelf, and with a force peculiar to the accompliſhment of writings which long had been regarded by this nation as their diſtinguiſhing glory. But, like the [a]infidel lord who would not believe the Prophet Eliſha's gracious prediction, they were to ſee the great promiſes of God fulfilled before their eyes and not to taſte of them.

Indeed, to verify incontrovertibly the reaſons here aſſigned for the Jewiſh diſpenſation, and to preclude all ſuppoſition of predilection in the Almighty for the poſterity of Jacob, his [b]beloved, for their own ſake excluſively, ten of the twelve tribes of Iſrael, rendered no longer uſeful in the grand ſcheme of man's ſalvation by their obſtinate idolatry and the limitation of the Meſſiah to the tribe of Judah, were many hundred years before his coming diſperſed and removed from the peculiar protection of the Almighty; a puniſhment, which was in a conſpicuous degree to await their brethren alſo, and which was only deferred till the great purpoſes of their ſeparate and national eſtabliſhment had been fully accompliſhed.

In the mean time the other nations of the earth were exerciſing, under various circumſtances and in various degrees, that reaſon,

[a] 2 Kings vii. 2. [b] Mal. i. 2.

which,

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which, however perverſely applied, was deſigned to promote their own [c] happineſs and the glory of their Creator.—After their diſperſion at Babel they formed themſelves into ſocieties, eſtabliſhed [d] empires, cultivated ſcience. But they [e] corrupted the Religion, given to Noah and his deſcendants, by Polytheiſm, as hath been declared, and by idolatry; they corrupted the promiſes and commands of God, and became continually more and more involved in ignorance both of his all-holy nature and of their own duty to him.

Their temporal ſucceſs however puffed up their vain imaginations, often tempted the true worſhippers to deſert the living Jehovah, often called down denunciations and inflictions of divine vengeance upon the Gentile, no leſs than upon the Jewiſh, idolater.

Human reaſon indeed did not ſucceed even

[c] "Parvulos nobis dedit igniculos, quos celeriter malis moribus opinionibuſque depravatis ſic reſtinguimus, ut nuſquam naturæ lumen appareat. Sunt enim ingeniis noſtris ſemina innata virtutum, quæ ſi adoleſcere liceret, ipſa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret." Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. l. iii. c. 1.

[d] Shuckford's Connect. vol. ii. p. 67. 2d edit.

[e] When Cicero deſcribes the Cauſes of the corruption of mankind, he mentions the poets firſt and with greater propriety than he was himſelf aware of; ſince theſe contributed, by debaſing divine traditions, to the general corruption very much more than could ever be known to the Roman philoſopher. Tuſc. Quæſt. l. iii. c. 2.

thus

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thus far every where. In countries diſtantly removed from the ſeat of Revelation, by degrees the moſt debaſing ſuperſtition uſurped the place of Religion, the powers of the mind were left uncultivated, and the fooliſh heart of man appears to have become [f]reprobate, and darkened, with regard to things temporal no leſs than eternal.

But though God was pleaſed ſo far to wink at theſe times of ignorance, as not immediately to interfere either to reform or to extirpate the offenders; and though he cauſed his ſun alike to ſhine upon the juſt and the unjuſt; yet no part of mankind was left unregarded by their great moral Governor: they were all going on with that ſtate of probation, to which they had been reduced by their original parents, or rather to which they had been reſtored by the mercy of God; and, according to their conduct in this probation, they were, under the Atonement of their great Redeemer, to receive their portion in another life.

The Gentiles, having a power, as Revelation [g]ſufficiently declares, to do by nature the

[f] Rom. i. 28.

[g] See Rom. i. 19, 20. Ibid. ii. 14. Beſides, we muſt here recollect, what has above been declared, that ſome aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit appears from the beginning to have been extended univerſally to the infirmities of human nature. See Gen. vi. 3. &c.

things

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things contained in the Law, might render themſelves fit objects of divine favour by living agreeably to its injunctions: and if they ſinned without Law, they were to periſh without Law, not leſs [h] aſſuredly, than they, who ſinned in the Law, were to be judged by the Law; [i] thoſe, who had no other written Law given them, having a Law written in their hearts, their conſciences bearing them witneſs.

The Gentiles, however, inſtead of ſtriving through divine aſſiſtance to extricate themſelves from the curſe of ſin, had not only proved unworthy of the food and gladneſs with which their hearts were filled, and conſequently much more unworthy of the eternal bleſſings to which they might have aſpired; but the Jews alſo, as we have ſeen, could with difficulty be reſtrained within bounds of religious duty. Even when this choſen people had ceaſed after the Babyloniſh captivity to profane their Religion by idolatry, they made it, as far as in them lay, of none [k] effect by their traditions.

But the perverſeneſs of the Gentiles and Jews had abundantly evinced the univerſal, and, by themſelves, irremediable, depravity of

[h] Rom. ii. 12. [i] Rom. ii. 14, 15.
[k] Mark vii. 13.

mankind;

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mankind; and [l]thus had been preparing the way for the great Redeemer.

Conducively alſo to the ſame important end, though the Gentiles had demonſtrated the inſufficiency of man's moſt cultivated reaſon to retrace, after long obliteration, the great duties of a religious life; yet the maxims, occaſionally inculcated, or oſtentatiouſly diſplayed, by their philoſophers, had illuſtrated the admirable fitneſs of ſuch a morality, as Chriſtianity was to enjoin:—whilſt at the ſame time the Jews, amidſt all their diſobedience, had preſerved and made [m]known the prophecies which were to authenticate the Redeemer; and, by abhorrence of Idolatry after their return from Babylon, had been brought to recommend the worſhip of the invifible God.

Preparation had by theſe and other means been made for the Redemption and perfect inſtruction of mankind. Preparation had been made: and the fulneſs of time came. After the Jewiſh Scriptures had been cloſed for an awful period of nearly four hundred years, the birth of the great Saviour was announced by a multitude of the heavenly hoſt. And well

[l] Rom. iii. 9, 25.

[m] Theſe prophecies were known not only to all the Jews, but alſo to the Heathens, as it appears from Virgil and other Heathen writers.

might

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might the important meſſage be declared to contain tidings of great joy to all people.

From the firſt fall of mankind ſin had reigned in their mortal bodies; and the wages of it had been continued miſery. Of this the Heathen philoſophers were ſo far ſenſible, that they recommended perfect [n] virtue, as the only ſolid foundation of happineſs. But as they could [o] no where find this virtue, they were at a loſs where to find their happy man.

By requiſitions, better ſuited to human infirmity, Revelation, from the firſt introduction of human miſery, had been preparing a renovation of happineſs for mankind: obſcurely and typically often in the beginning; but not ſo, when Chriſtianity was finally propoſed as the completion of all former revelations.

The Chriſtian covenant began not with the moſt diſtant requiſition of Stoical apathy or unattainable perfection. The voice of him, that cried in the wilderneſs, required no ſuch qualifications in mankind. It [p] addreſſed itſelf to them, as ſinful creatures, and exhorted them to repent. With the ſame exhortation the Redeemer alſo himſelf [q] entered upon the pub-

[n] See the fifth book of Cicero's Tuſculan Queſtions.

[o] "Nemo ſine vitiis naſcitur" is a truth univerſally admitted by the wiſeſt Heathens.

[p] Mat. iii. 2. [q] Mat. iv, 17. Mark i. 15.

lication

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lication of his Religion; and the ſame was the introductory doctrine of his [r] diſciples and deſtined ſucceſſors. The firſt ſtep towards the reſtoration of mankind to divine favour was repeatedly pointed out in an humble confeſſion of their own unworthineſs.

Nor were the ſubſequent means of counteracting the bad effects of their depravity left either to be diſcovered, or to be regulated, by themſelves. By [s] inſtructions, delivered in his own and his Father's [t] name from his mouth who ſpake as never man ſpake, and by his all-perfect example and [u] atonement, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without ſin, ſuch proviſion was made for our aſſiſtance and acceptance in the performance of our duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourſelves, as at once is calculated to reſtore our nature to its proper perfection and to [w] proportion to our abilities the obedience required from us.

[r] Mark vi. 12.

[s] See more concerning this inſtruction in the fifth Sermon, where it is urged, under the internal evidences of our Religion, as an argument in its favour.

[t] Mat. 5th, 6th and 7th chapters, John v. 43. Ib. vii. 16, 17.

[u] 2 Cor. v. 21. See alſo the parts of Scripture above referred to concerning this Atonement.

[w] Matt. xxv. 14—23.

During

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During the miniſtry upon earth of this wonderful Perſonage, he was engaged either in thus inſtructing his followers with regard to their duty, and in providing the merciful means of their preſent and future happineſs; or in evincing, by diſplays of the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles and by completions of prophecies, the reality of his pretenſions and divine miſſion. During his miniſtry upon earth, whatſoever had been written in the Law, or in the Prophets, concerning the office and character, concerning the birth, life, propitiatory death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the great Redeemer received in Jeſus of Nazareth its perfect accompliſhment.

From the moment that the glorified Jeſus, having ariſen from the dead, was inveſted with his office of Interceſſor for mankind and was openly announced as their future judge, their promiſed Redemption was completed. A new covenant between God and man commenced; a covenant, into which all [x] nations were to be admitted by Baptiſm, and in which they were to be ſupported and perfected at the Lord's Supper, by [y] commemorations of the great ſacrifice which had been offered for their ſins; a covenant, which, though comprehenſive in its efficacy of the firſt man and [z] all his deſcendants,

[x] Matt. xxviii. 19. [y] Luke xxii. 19.

[z] See concerning the univerſality of Chriſtianity the

 paſſages

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diſcloſed itſelf with various degrees of light, and ſhone not forth in all its ſplendour before the aſcenſion of its great mediator.

From that time God was pleaſed explicitly to [a]inform mankind concerning their ſtate of trial in this life, and concerning the conditions of their future judgment:—that, though they muſt here remain ſubject to temptation from the world, the fleſh, and the Devil, and at length to death itſelf; they were provided with abundant means of eſcaping that miſery hereafter, which is to be the certain and dreadful conſequence of wilful perſeverance in Irreligion and which is called death eternal:—that, through the infinite atonement made for them by his bleſſed Son, he would aſſiſt their infirmities by the preventing and continued influence of his Holy Spirit, would pardon their ſins, and reward them with peace here and eternal glory hereafter; provided, on their part, that they would embrace theſe his gracious offers with that determined Faith in the doctrines revealed by him, which proceeds, under the evidences of their truth, from humble reliance on his infinite perfections; and with that obedience to his precepts, which

paſſages of Scripture above cited, and alſo what is ſaid on the ſubject in the ſixth Sermon.

[a] This information may be collected from the univerſal tenor of the Apoſtolical writings.

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demonſtrates a ſincere and univerſal deſire to obey them.

The Apoſtles and others were appointed to announce this covenant; whilſt the perſons to whom it was announced, being in poſſeſſion of the free will, which their original parents, and their more immediate anceſtors, the Gentiles and Jews, ſo obſtinately perverted, had full power to accept or reject it. It was foretold that preachers ſhould continue in future ages to propoſe the ſame terms, and that mankind ſhould continue to be inveſted with the ſame powers of acceptance or rejection. But in Chriſtianity every offer of divine mercy was to be completed. No farther covenant was ever to be propoſed; nor this withdrawn. If even an angel from heaven were to teach any other doctrine, he was to be [b] accurſed; whilſt at the ſame time all the [c] ſcoffs of the latter days and the [d] gates of hell itſelf were never to prevail to the eradication of this holy Religion.

Such is the ſubſtance of our Religion, as it extends from the moſt remote circumſtance any where revealed in Scripture to the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt. Such therefore our Religion was at the time of its original completion; and ſuch

[b] Gal. i. 8. [c] 2 Pet. iii. 3. [b] Matt. xvi. 18.

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alſo it continues to be to this day: the grand ſcheme of man's reſtoration to divine favour, having been fully perfected by the acceptance of the atonement made for him by his great Redeemer, and admitting not in itſelf of any variation from ſubſequent circumſtances of time or place.

As to the diſplay of miraculous powers with which our religion was afterwards publiſhed, and the infallible manner, in which it was ſo recorded for the permanent uſe of mankind, as to enable them with certainty to collect for themſelves in every age thoſe conditions of their future and eternal happineſs which have been above ſtated; theſe are circumſtances of which the relation will fall under the next head.

SERMON

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SERMON II.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

HAVING ſtated in hiſtorical order the ſubſtance of our Religion, as it extends from the moſt remote circumſtance any where revealed in Scripture to the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, I am now to give a ſketch of the hiſtory of our Religion from this publication of the Goſpel to the preſent times; and thus to point out the anſwer, which we may give concerning the hope that is in us, as far as relates to the manner in which our Religion has been received and conveyed through ſucceſſive periods down to our own times.

This head is ſo extenſive, that, compendiouſly diſcuſſed, it will furniſh matter for three Diſcourſes: the firſt will carry us from the

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publication of our religion after the aſcenſion of Chriſt to the eſtabliſhment of it by Conſtantine; the ſecond from its eſtabliſhment by Conſtantine to the commencement of the Reformation; and the third from the commencement of the Reformation to the preſent times, or (as I have limited this part of my ſubject) to the preſent ſtate of our own Church.

To begin then with the firſt of theſe periods:—the Apoſtles, who were commiſſioned by our bleſſed Saviour to publiſh his Religion, were men deſtitute of worldly advantages; but they were men, who had been [e] with him from the beginning, and, together with their great perſecutor and future aſſociate, were diſtinguiſhed by an ingenuouſneſs of mind, which in all ages has been required, as a neceſſary preparation for the reception of divine Truth. St. Peter's repentance, St. Thomas's confeſſion, and St. Paul's converſion, are eminent diſplays of this diſpoſition.

At firſt the Apoſtles, like their great Maſter, confined their inſtruction to that nation which had hitherto been the more immediate object of divine Revelation. They ſoon however learned, that the God, whom they preached, was not the God of the Jews only, but

[e] John xv. 27.

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of the Gentiles alſo. The miraculous effuſion of the Holy Spirit by degrees opened and enlarged their underſtandings on this important ſubject; and his various gifts raiſed their feeble powers to the ability of executing the taſk of preaching the Goſpel to the whole world, to which they had been commiſſioned by their great Maſter.

It was impoſſible that our Saviour ſhould himſelf in his human capacity be every where preſent before his ſufferings to preach his Goſpel: and, as the Jewiſh nation had been particularly calculated for his reception and Judæa was to be the theatre of his mighty works, it was [f] neceſſary that the Goſpel ſhould be firſt preached unto the Jews. But, from the commencement of this ſalvation, the Gentiles were not unappriſed that they alſo were to partake of its bleſſings. No ſooner did the Saviour of mankind appear in the fleſh, than the wiſe men of the Eaſt were conducted by the leading of a ſtar to the habitation of this king of Iſrael. And no ſooner again was the ſalvation of mankind effected, than the partition between the Jewiſh and Gentile worſhippers was removed; the veil of the temple was immediately rent in twain from the top to the bottom. St. Paul alſo

[f] Acts xiii. 46.

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was ſoon after called to be the Apoſtle of the Gentiles: Cornelius's prayer was heard: the Holy Ghoſt fell upon him: and that Goſpel, which had hitherto been the peculiar glory of Iſrael, became a light to lighten the Gentiles.

In the Acts of the Apoſtles we have a conciſe account of the inceſſant ardour, with which the preachers of Chriſtianity went on, after the communication of the Goſpel to the Gentiles, to make known to the whole world the glad tidings of their miniſtry. Their zeal carried them by different routes into diſtant countries: ſupernatural powers every where raiſed for them the attention of mankind: and the ſanctity of their lives and doctrines improved this attention to the advantage of their new Religion.

How far they actually extended their progreſs has been the ſubject of curious and often of ſceptical inquiry. It is perhaps impoſſible, it certainly is unneceſſary, to determine this queſtion in the preſent age. The natural bleſſings of any country are effaced by indolence or diſaſter; and both the advantage and remembrance of religious improvements are done away by the neglect, or the perverſion, of religious obligations. But, notwithſtanding every inſinuation to the contrary, we may reſt aſſured from good authority that the firſt preachers of

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of Chriſtianity not only [g] viſited all the diſtinguiſhed countries of the old world; but alſo that their zeal carried them [h] beyond the regions, into which either ambition or avarice had in thoſe days furniſhed means of extending the geographical diſcoveries of Roman ſcience.—The prediction was fully accompliſhed, which declared that before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem [i] "the Goſpel ſhould be "preached in all the world for a witneſs to all "nations;" and St. Paul had the joyful opportunity of aſſuring the Coloſſians, that "[k] the Goſpel was come unto them, as it was "alſo in all the [l] world."

[g] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 37, 38.

[h] Tertullian ſays "Britannorum inacceſſa Romanis loca, Chriſto vero ſubdita"—adverſus Judæos, c. 7.

Euſebius alſo ſays concerning our Saviour's original diſciples, "Κηρυτ̃ειν δε (αυτους) εις παντας το του Ιησυ ονομα, και τας παραδοξους πραξεις αυτου κατα τε αγρυς και κατα πολιν διδασκειν, και τους μεν αυτων την Ρωμαιων αρχην και αυτην τε την βασιλικωτατην πολιν νειμασθαι, τυς δε την Περσων, τους δε την Αρμενιων, ἑτερους δε το Παρθων εθνος, και αυ παλιν το Σκυθων, τινας δε ηδη και επ' αυτα της οικυμενης ελθειν τα ακρα, επι τε την Ινδων φθασαι χωραν, και ἑτερους ὑπερ τον ωκεανον παρελθειν επι τας καλουμενας Βρετ̃ανικας νησους." Euſeb. Demonſ. Evangel. l. iii. p. 112. edit. Par. 1628.

[i] Matt. xxiv. 14. [k] Col. i. 6.

[l] See Origen againſt Celſus, l. i. c. 7. and l. ii. c. 13. Paris 1733.

Correſpondently with this propagation of our Religion Arnobius ſays, "Quod ſi falſa, ut dicitis, hiſtoria illa re-"rum eſt, unde tam brevi tempore mundus iſta religione "com-

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The Apoſtles in their firſt preaching of Chriſtianity contented themſelves with delivering by oral communication the great and ſimple truths of their Religion. The extent of their perſonal induſtry was the extent alſo of their inſtruction. This induſtry however was indefatigable: and its ſucceſs was ſoon followed by other means both of diſſeminating and ſupporting the truth.

Within a [m] ſhort time after the deſcent of the Holy Spirit it pleaſed divine Providence that St. Matthew ſhould publiſh an account

" completus?" Adv. Gentes, l. i. p. 33. Lugd. Bat. 1651.

[m] " Poſtea enim quam ſurrexit Dominus noſter a mor-
" tuis et induti ſunt ſupervenientis Spiritus Sancti virtu-
" tem ex alto, de omnibus adimpleti ſunt et habuerunt
" perfectam agnitionem, ut exierunt in fines terræ ea quæ
" a Deo nobis bona ſunt evangelizantes, et cœleſtem pa-
" cem hominibus annunciantes, qui quidem omnes pariter
" et ſinguli eorum habentes Evangelium Dei. Ita Mat-
" thæus ſcripturam edidit Evangelii," &c. Irenæus adv. Hær. l. iii. c. i. edit. Maſſuet.

I might mention the opinions of Lardner and others concerning the time when the Goſpels were written: but, for the ſake of preciſion, I ſhall mention that of Townſon only, who is among the lateſt approved writers on the ſubject. He ſuppoſes, with Coſmas of Alexandria, that St. Matthew wrote his Goſpel about the time of the perſecution upon St. Stephen's death; Diſcourſes on the Goſpels, p. 25. And again he ſays p. 113. " we may reſt
" ſecure that St. Matthew's Goſpel was written by the
" year 37."

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of the life, doctrines, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of his great Maſter. Thus was a foundation laid for ſimilar and ſupplemental writings, which enſued in their reſpective ſeaſons. About twenty years after the publication of St. Matthew's Goſpel, [n] St. Mark, the diſciple of St. Peter, abridged, as it appears, in many inſtances the Goſpel of St. Matthew, and by the addition of ſome particular circumſtances adapted it more fully to general uſe. A farther interval of a few [o] years ſucceeded, before St. Luke, the beloved companion of St. Paul, undertook to write on the ſame ſubject and finiſhed his Goſpel to the particular advantage of the Gentile world; [p] putting into it the doctrines preached by St. Paul.

In the mean time the more diſtinguiſhed among the Apoſtles were labouring inceſſantly in the great work of converting mankind: and being ordained, like the Evangeliſts, to teach men of every country and every age, they were perpetuating in common with them the

[n] Townſon ſays that St. Mark's Goſpel was written about the end of the year 56, or of the year 60. Diſcourſes, p. 168.

[o] With regard to St. Luke's Goſpel, Townſon ſays only, that it was written after St. Matthew's and St. Mark's, and that St. Luke had ſeen thoſe Goſpels, p. 200.

[p] See Irenæus adverſ. Hær. l. iii. c. 14. See alſo Bp. Horſley's Tracts, 8vo. 1789. p. 326.

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various inſtructions by which they were to build up the Church of God. In the Acts of the Apoſtles, written by St. Luke, and in the various Epiſtles ſtill extant, and written by St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter, St. Jude, and St. John, we may admire the [q]contempt of danger with which theſe Holy men atteſted the truth of what they had heard and ſeen; we may admire the zeal with which they went on to improve their diſciples; we may admire alſo the Mercy of God, who has furniſhed poſterity through their means with the moſt perfect inſtructions in righteouſneſs.

But there is one circumſtance, which regards the writings of the New Teſtament and which particularly calls for our grateful admiration. It was appointed by the Providence of God that theſe writings ſhould be ſubmitted to general examination, and be left to make their different impreſſions on good and bad men, before the deſtined finiſher of them was removed from the world. At an interval of not ſo little as [r]fifty years after the publica-

q "As far as eccleſiaſtical hiſtory can aſcertain us of it, "all the Apoſtles but John (and that to make good the "prediction of Chriſt) ſuffered violent deaths by the "hands of thoſe that perſecuted them merely for their "doctrines." Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 275. 4to. edit. 1680.

r Townſon ſays, p. 109, that St. John's Goſpel was publiſhed after the taking of Jeruſalem: And again, p. 211,

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tion of St. Matthew's Goſpel, St. John is ſaid to have ſanctioned by his [s]approbation the three firſt Goſpels, to have ſupplied their [t]deficiencies in his own, and to have refuted in it ſome [u]heretical opinions which had ariſen concerning the perſon and dignity of his Saviour.

In the ſame manner the Epiſtles had been generally received and had produced their effect, before he addreſſed to the ſeven Churches of Aſia thoſe exhortations, and moſt remarkable predictions which cloſe the ſacred volume. Long was the beloved diſciple preſerved in this life, that by his concurrence at a diſtant period he might give the ſtrongeſt

211, that the ſeveral circumſtances as to the writing of it are ſtrongly in favour of its late publication.

[s] Euſebius ſays of St. John, "τελος δε επι την γραφην ελ-
"θειν τοιασδε χαριν αιτιας· των προαναγραφεντων τριων εις παν-
"τας ηδη και εις αυτον διαδεδομενων αποδεξασθαι μεν φασι, αλη-
"θειαν αυτοις επιμαρτυρησαντα." Hiſt. Eccl. l. iii. c. 25. Reading's Ed. See alſo Cave's Hiſt. Liter. vol. i. p. 16.

[t] Jortin ſays, "St. John had ſeen the three firſt Goſpels, "for he wrote his own as a ſupplement to them." Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 46. 1ſt edit.

[u] That St. John's Goſpel was written againſt the Nicolaitans and Cerinthus is aſſerted by Iræneus, l. iii. c. 11. p. 188.

Jortin ſays, "the Ebionites denied the Divinity, and "the Docetæ the Humanity of Chriſt; and St. John "ſeems to have had them both in view." Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 266.

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confirmation to the veracity of the other Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, and that he might ſupply whatever could be wanted either to edify or to conſole the Chriſtian believer till the conſummation of all things: thus before he was admitted to the joy of his Lord, he was to facilitate the progreſs of others to the ſame happineſs.

Various and deciſive are the arguments, by which theſe Scriptures of the New Teſtament, as [w] Euſebius has aſcertained their number and as we have them at preſent, come recommended to our [x] acceptance. A correſpondence between our text and the citations and verſions of the earlieſt ages eſtabliſhes beyond a poſſibility of doubt the general authenticity of our modern copies. That the writings themſelves were alſo given by Inſpiration ought not to be doubted by any one, who admits the truth of the doctrines contained in them.

[w] Hiſt. Eccl. l. iii. c. 25.

[x] Moſheim ſays that the books of the New Teſtament were the greateſt part of them received in the Church before the middle of the ſecond century—vol. i. p. 108.—Engliſh Tranſlation, 8vo. 1782.

The Canonical books are ſuppoſed not to have been finally and authoritatively fixed before the Council of Laodicea, towards the end of the fourth century. But Lardner ſays that the Canon may juſtly be ſaid to have been ſettled before that time.—Works, 8vo. 1788. vol. vi. p. 29.

For

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For if the Holy Spirit was to direct the Apoſtles in their addreſſes to the [y] adverſaries of our Religion; we cannot ſuſpect that his aſſiſtance would be withholden, when they were addreſſing themſelves to the perſons, for whoſe ſake thoſe adverſaries were to be refuted, and that too in words, which, whether it were known immediately or not, were to be recorded for the inſtruction of all ages.

In the ſame manner if the Holy Spirit interfered to controul and direct the Apoſtles with regard to the [z] places where they were to preach, and the Goſpel which they preached was not taught them but by the [a] Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt; we may reſt aſſured that they were not left to their own unaſſiſted reaſon in delivering thoſe among their doctrines, which were to be of the moſt extenſive and laſting importance. And beſides, if it was foretold that the Holy Spirit ſhould [b] teach the Apoſtles all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatſoever Chriſt had ſaid unto them, and expreſsly that he ſhould [c] guide them to all truth; doubtleſs, we have abundant reaſon to preſume that their writ-

[y] Luke xxi. 15.
[z] Acts xiii. 2. Ibid. xxi. 9, 7.
[a] Gal. i. 12.
[b] John xiv. 26.
[c] John xvi. 13.

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ings muſt have been delivered under [d] his infallible direction.

With regard to the firſt part of the ſacred writings, which is contained in the Jewiſh Scriptures, our bleſſed Saviour [e] declares concerning the Law, that it was eaſier for Heaven and Earth to paſs away than that one tittle of it ſhould fail: we are informed alſo on the [f] authority of the New Teſtament, that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt; and beſides, that David [g] ſpake by the Holy Ghoſt.

And ſince this is the caſe with regard to the different [h] parts of the Jewiſh Scriptures; what ſhall we ſay concerning the Scriptures of the new and eternal covenant? What ſhall

[d] It is perhaps worthy of obſervation, that on the very day, which has always been celebrated by the Jews in remembrance of the wonderful delivery of the Law on mount Sinai, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended to direct and illuminate the minds of the Apoſtles.

[e] Luke xvi. 17. [f] 2 Pet. i. 21.

[g] Mark xii. 36.

[h] A particular account of the books of the Old Teſtament is given by Euſebius from Joſephus, and from Origen. See in Euſebius's Eccl. Hiſt. the account from Joſephus, l. iii. c. 10; and from Origen, l. vi. c. 25. Theſe books of the Old Teſtament were divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa: the laſt of theſe three diviſions includes the Pſalms, Proverbs, &c.

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we ſay concerning thoſe diſcourſes of our bleſſed Saviour recorded in the Goſpels, of which he himſelf ſpeaks more forcibly than of the Law, declaring, [i] "that Heaven and "Earth ſhall paſs away, but his word ſhall "not paſs away?" What ſhall we ſay concerning thoſe paſſages of the Epiſtles which are expreſsly ſaid to have been ſpoken by the Lord? And what concerning numberleſs other paſſages both in the Goſpels and Epiſtles, which are undiſtinguiſhed from the reſt, and foretell things to come, or relate things paſt, with a preciſion, for which it is impoſſible to account, except by aſcribing it to that Divine Spirit who was to teach the Apoſtles and bring to their remembrance remote occurrences?

But we muſt not confine ourſelves to particular paſſages of the New Teſtament. St. Paul [k] aſſerts, that "all Scripture was given by "Inſpiration." St. Peter [l] claſſes St. Paul's writings among the Scriptures. And as the promiſed aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the Apoſtles, and [m] men could be found, among the early Chriſtians, even for inferior employments, who were full of his divine influence; doubtleſs, we cannot wonder, not

[i] Mark xiii. 31.
[k] 2 Tim. iii. 16.
[l] 2 Pet. iii. 16.
[m] Acts 6.

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only that the writings of all the Apoſtles, but that thoſe alſo of their conſtant attendants, St. Mark and St. Luke, ſhould have been claſſed from the beginning by the Church of Chriſt among the ſame inſpired Scriptures. How ſhall we then not ſay of all theſe writings, which St. Paul himſelf, on a particular occaſion, ſays of his own, "that they are the [n]commandments of the Lord?" And what [o]exceptions dare we make to the univerſal Inſpiration of the ſubject-matter, at leaſt, of compoſitions, delivered down to us under ſuch circumſtances?

On this immoveable [p]foundation of truth, and divine Inſpiration, Chriſtianity erected itſelf and went on to increaſe. Communities of Chriſtians were formed; regulations were

[n] 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

[o] That the writers themſelves made no ſuch exceptions, ſee Horbery's 8th Sermon, 1774.

[p] From Ignatius's Epiſtle to the Philadelphians (c. 7.) it even appears, that the extraordinary Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity was not confined to the writers of the New Teſtament excluſively. He ſays, when exhorting them to adhere to their Biſhops, their body of Preſbyters, and their Deacons, "Οι ωτσαντες (forſitan ὑποπτευσαντες) με ὡς προειδοτα τον μερισμον τινων λεγειν ταυτα· μαρτυς δε μοι εν ᾧ δεδεμαι ὁτι απο σαρκος ανθρωπινης ουκ εγνων. Το δε πνευμα εκηρυσσε λεγων ταδε κ. τ. λ." In the ſame manner he ſays to the Epheſians (Epiſt. c. 20.) that he would inſtruct them in ſome points, "μαλιστα εαν ὁ Κυριος μοι αποκαλυψῃ."

inſtituted

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inſtituted for their religious [q] worſhip and government; and [r] Biſhops immediately appoint-

[q] That forms of prayer were not only uſed by the primitive Chriſtians, but alſo ſuch as correſpond in many inſtances with our own, and eſpecially in the part which relates to the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, ſee Cave's Prim. Chriſt. vol. i. c. 11: and that rules of Faith were admitted by them, ſee Tertullian againſt Praxeas, chapter the 2d.

[r] Clemens Romanus, the Fellow-labourer of St. Paul, ſays "Και οι αποστολοι ημων εγνωσαν δια του Κυριου ημων Ιησου "Χριστου ότι εριδος εσται επι του ονοματος της επισκοπης. Δια ταυ-"την ουν την αιτιαν προγνωσιν ειληφοτες τελειαν κατεστησαν τους "προειρημενους (ſcilicet επισκοπους και διακονους) και μεταξυ "επινομην δεδωκασιν, όπως, εαν κοιμηθωσιν, διαδεξωνται έτεροι "δεδοκιμασμενοι ανδρες την λειτουργιαν αυτων." Epiſt. 1ma. ad Cor. c. 44.

An account of the nature of the epiſcopal office in the firſt century may be ſeen in Moſheim's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 105, &c. Engl. Edit. 1782.

Various paſſages might be cited from Ignatius's genuine Epiſtles to prove the great ſtreſs which this Diſciple of St. John lays on the Epiſcopal authority. Indeed, Moſheim ſays of theſe Epiſtles, "nulla forte lis pleriſque "Ignatianarum Epiſtolarum mota fuiſſet, niſi qui pro divi-"no origine et antiquitate gubernationis epiſcopalis pug-"nant, cauſam ſuam ex his fulcire potuiſſent." De rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtant. p. 160.

Hooker goes ſo far as to challenge the ſectaries of his time "to find out but one Church upon the face of the "whole earth, that hath been ordered by their diſcipline, "or that hath not been ordered by ours, that is to ſay by "epiſcopal regiment ſithence the time of the bleſſed Apo-"ſtles were here converſant." Pref. to Eccl. Pol. p. 10. Edit. 1666.

See alſo on this ſubject Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 74—83.

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ed, and proviſion made for a ſucceſſion of others, to ſuperintend and enforce theſe regulations. In the hiſtory of the Apoſtles we read of Churches in Aſia and other parts: and among their Epiſtles we find ſome, which make expreſs mention of [s] Biſhops, Deacons, and Elders, and which were purpoſely written to inſtruct and confirm the new Biſhops.

That theſe Biſhops alſo were diſtinguiſhed from the Elders or Preſbyters, [t] before, or very

74—83. Cave's Hiſtor. Liter. vol. i. p. 42. Heylyn's Reformation juſtified, p. 202 and 251. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 617. and Bingham's Antiquities of the Chriſtian Church, b. ii. c. 1. Fol. Edit. 1726. What Lord Chancellor King ſays on epiſcopal Government in his "Enquiry into the conſtitution, &c. of the Primitive "Church" is well anſwered by a Preſbyter of the Church of England in a book, entitled "an original Draught of "the Primitive Church," and publiſhed in the year 1717. An anſwer to it may alſo be found in Biſhop Smalridge's Sermons, Fol. p. 107—112.

[s] 1 Tim. chapters 3d. and 5th.

[t] Chillingworth informs us in his "Apoſtolical Inſtitution of Epiſcopacy demonſtrated" (which is compriſed in four pages) that Petrus Molinæus in a book, purpoſely written in defence of the Preſbyterian government, acknowledgeth "that preſently after the Apoſtles' times, "or even in their time (as eccleſiaſtical hiſtory witneſſeth) "it was ordained that in every city one of the Preſbytery "ſhould be called a Biſhop, who ſhould have Preemi-"nence over his colleagues to avoid confuſion which oft "times ariſeth out of equality. And truly this form "of government all Churches every where received." Chillingworth adds that another great defender of the Preſ-

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ſoon [u]after, the death of St. John, the moſt zealous friends of the Preſbyterian form of Church government allow. And were we even to concede that this diſtinction was not always made antecedently to the expiration of the Apoſtolical age; no reaſon can be aſſigned for an univerſal prevalence of it immediately after that period, which is not derived from deciſions and injunctions, [w]delivered down by

Preſbytery Theodorus Beza confeſſeth in effect the ſame thing. He alſo ſubjoins in a Note the conceſſions of two other writers from Geneva: referring his readers at length for fuller proofs to Dr. Hammond's Diſſertations againſt Blondel, which he ſays "were never anſwered and never "will." See Chillingworth's Safe-Way, &c.—P. 321. 4th Edit. London 1674.

[u] Walo Meſſalinus de Epiſcopis et Preſbyteris (8vo. p. 253. Lugd. Bat. 1641.) ſays that the diſtinction aroſe about the beginning or middle of the ſecond century. And Blondel in his Apol. pro ſententia Hieronymi (Preface, p. 11. Amſtelodami 1646) makes it commence about the year 135.

[w] During the life-time of the Apoſtles, preſbyters, as Dr. Bentley inſiſts, were called επισκοποι, or overſeers, juſt as ſuperintendents in the Heathen world were at that time ſo denominated on different occaſions. But the Apoſtles having appointed their ſucceſſors in the ſeveral cities and communities and being themſelves removed from this world, the holy men thus appointed, though evidently the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles and not of the firſt επισκοποι, or overſeers, were too modeſt to aſſume the title of Apoſtles and contented themſelves with that of Biſhops: and "from that time it was agreed over Chriſ-"tendom at once in the very next generation after the

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the Apoſtles themſelves, concerning their ſucceſſors in the paſtoral care and government of the Church.

The early Biſhops fell little ſhort of the Apoſtles in zeal and integrity. Theſe holy men, having extended to the utmoſt of their abilities the knowledge of the truth, taught their converts by their own Example to live according to the doctrines of their profeſſion, and by the ſame perſuaſive motive made them rejoice and triumph, when they were called upon to crown a well-ſpent life by a death of pious fortitude.

How far indeed the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles in the ſuperintendence of the Church ſucceeded them alſo in equal or even in ſimilar powers of ſupernatural agency, is a queſtion, which the injudicious aſſertions of the friends, and the artful inſinuations of the enemies of Chriſtianity, render it very [x] difficult for the preſent age to determine. But (bleſſed be the great Contriver and Perfecter of our Salva-

"Apoſtles to aſſign and appropriate to them the word "επισκοπος, or Biſhop." See Phileleutherus Lipſienſis, Remark 35.

[x] Jortin ſays, "I would not engage for the truth of "the miracles after the year 107: but I wiſh to be claſſed "with the doubters, not the deniers." Rem. on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 71. He muſt however be ſuppoſed here to except the miracle on Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem. See Notes on the 6th Sermon.

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tion!) the determination is not eſſential to our Faith. Already had the Almighty ſet his ſeal to the truth of Chriſtianity. Already had thoſe miracles of our great Redeemer and his original diſciples, which are recorded in holy Writ and which admit of proof in every age, laid deep the foundation of that Religion againſt which the gates of Hell were never to prevail.

It appears to have been [y] neceſſary that we ſhould have the means of proving that our bleſſed Saviour authenticated his pretenſions by ſupernatural actions. It was perhaps neceſſary that we ſhould have means of proving alſo that the Apoſtles, who were the witneſſes of his reſurrection and aſcenſion, attracted the reſpect and commanded the belief of mankind by the power with which they were endued from on high. But no reaſon has ever been

y Chryſoſtom ſays, "Μη τοινυν το με γινεσθαι νυν σημεια "τεκμηριον ποιου του μη γεγενησθαι ποτε· και γαρ τοτε χρησι- "μως εγενετο, και νυν χρησιμως ου γινεται." And again, "νυν απο των θειων γραφων και των τοτε σημειων την πιστιν ων λε- "γομεν παρεχομεθα." Hom. 6. in 1 Cor. 2. p. 276. tom. iii. Eton.

So likewiſe St. Auguſtin ſays, "Accepimus majores "noſtros eo gradu fidei, quo a temporalibus ad æterna "conſcenditur, viſibilia miracula (nec enim aliter po- "terant) ſecutos eſſe: per quos id actum eſt ut neceſſaria "non eſſent poſteris." De vera Religione, c. 25. Paris 1679.

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aſſigned, why we ſhould be enabled to prove that miracles were performed by Chriſtians in any ſucceeding age, which might not encourage us to hope for ſimilar interpoſitions in our own.

Not that it is my intention to queſtion any authentic facts of this nature which are left us upon record; much leſs to give up, as fictions of pious fraud, all the relations of ſubſequent miracles. It is my intention merely to aſſert that theſe miracles are not at preſent [z] eſſential to the vindication of Chriſtianity: and if we have not ſufficient arguments to eſtabliſh the credit of thoſe among them which are genuine; it ought to be referred to the expiration of the period for which they were deſigned. They were deſigned to make up for the want of general information concerning the nature and evidences of our Religion, which muſt have been in an eminent degree the irremediable misfortune of numberleſs individuals in its early ages: they were deſigned alſo to comfort and ſupport the Chriſtians of thoſe ages under their peculiar circumſtances

[z] "With any other miracles" (than thoſe of Chriſt and his Apoſtles) "however numerous, however confi-"dently aſſerted or plauſibly ſet forth, we have nothing "to do. There may have been ten thouſand impoſtures "of this ſort." Hurd's Lincoln's Inn Sermons, vol. ii. p. 79.

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of diſtreſs. Being to us therefore in both thoſe reſpects unneceſſary, they may well be ſuppoſed for that reaſon to have deſcended with a leſs deciſive weight of evidence.

But, whatever were the aſſiſtances afforded to the early Paſtors of the Church, they appear to have made an active uſe of their powers, whether natural or inſpired. They converted great numbers [a] every where to the

[a] Juſtin Martyr tells Trypho, "ουδε ἐν γαρ ὁλως ἐϛι το "γενος ανθρωπων, ειτε βαρβαρων, ειτε Ἑλληνων, ειτε ἁπλως ὡτι- "νιουν ονομαϛι ϖροσαγορευομενων, η αμαξοβιων η αοικων καλου- "μενων, η εν σκηναις κτηνοτροφων οικουντων, εν οἱς μη δια του ονο- "ματος του ϛαυρωθεντος Ιησου ευχαι και ευχαριϛιαι τῳ ϖατρι και "ϖοιητῃ των ὁλων γινονται," p. 345. Edit. Par. 1615. An enumeration of the nations by which Chriſtianity was received in Tertullian's time may be ſeen in his Treatiſe adverſ. Judæos, c. 7. which he concludes in this very remarkable manner: "Chriſti autem regnum et nomen "ubique porrigitur, ubique creditur, ab omnibus gen- "tibus ſupernumeratis colitur, ubique regnat, ubique "adoratur, omnibus ubique tribuitur æqualiter: non "regis apud illum major gratia, non Barbari alicujus in- "ferior lætitia, non dignitatum aut natalium cujuſquam "diſcreta merita, omnibus æqualis, omnibus rex, omnibus "judex, omnibus Deus et Dominus eſt." Euſebius ſays on the ſame ſubject that Chriſtian Churches were erected "ουκ εν αδηλοις ϖου και αφανεσι τοποις, αλλ' εν ταις μαλιϛα δια- "ϖρεϖεϛαταις ϖολεσιν ἱδρυνθεισαι· επ' αυτης λεγω της Ῥωμαιων "βασιλευουϛης, επι τε της Αλεξανδριων, και Αντιοχεων, καθ' "ὁλης τε της Αιγυϖτου, και Λιβυης, Ευρωϖης τε και Ασιας, εν "τε κωμαις τε και χωραις, και ϖαντοιοις εθνεϛι·" Dem. Evang. l. iii. p. 138.

See alſo the citation above made from p. 112. of the ſame

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Faith: and if the unaffected piety and zeal of ſuch converts to Chriſtianity in the three [b] firſt centuries, and the want of thoſe qualities in its ſubſequent profeſſors, be conſidered; it will perhaps not be thought a violation of charity to doubt whether there were not more Chriſtian virtue in the world before the expiration of thoſe centuries, than detractors from the number and integrity of the early profeſſors of our Religion can prove to have exiſted at any future period.

But let not the ſuggeſtion of ſuch a doubt be ſuppoſed to carry with it any inſinuation that the early Chriſtians were exempted from

ſame work. Arnobius likewiſe ſays, "Vel hæc ſaltem "nobis faciant argumenta credendi quod jam per omnes "terras, in tam brevi tempore et parvo, immenſi nominis "hujus ſacramenta diffuſa ſunt, quod nulla jam natio eſt "tam barbari moris quæ non ejus amore verſa molliverit." Adv. Gentes, l. ii. p. 44.

With regard to Heathen authorities concerning the extenſive propagation of Chriſtianity in its early ages ſee the paſſages adduced by Dr. Powell from Suetonius, Dio, Julian, Tacitus, Pliny, &c. Sermon X, p. 154—162.

See moreover on this ſubject Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 54.

[b] See concerning the characters of the Chriſtians in the firſt ages what Cave ſays in the fourth chapter of his "Primitive Chriſtianity;" and what he urges at large, in the remaining parts of this work, on the manner in which they diſcharged their Duty towards God, themſelves, and their neighbours.

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all the bad conſequences of the depravity of human nature. Both the cenſures and the exhortations of the Apoſtolical Epiſtles prove the contrary, even with regard to the Apoſtles' own age. And the ſame appears to have been the caſe in an increaſing and [c]alarming degree, as we advance nearer to the reign of Conſtantine. However, it was by no means the caſe in any degree to be compared with the habitual profligacy, which has ſince prevailed among Chriſtians and diſcovered itſelf by continued prevalences both of fraudulent ſuperſtition and of ſceptical indifference.

Nor were the early paſtors leſs anxious to defend than to enlarge their care. On all ſides grievous wolves entered in not ſparing the flock. [d]Perverſe brethren diſtracted the minds of the weak: and cruel adverſaries from without aſſaulted not only the Faith, but alſo the lives, of thoſe who called on the name of Chriſt. While however the common

[c] Euſebius ſays of the Chriſtian Church about the year 300, "ὡς εκ της επι πλεον ελευθεριας επι χαυνοτητα και ναθριαν "τα καθ' ἡμας μετηλλαττετο, αλλων αλλοις διαφθονουμενων και "διαλοιδορουμενων και μονονουχι ἡμων αυτων ἑαυτοις προσπολε- "μουντων οπλοις, ει ούτω τυχοι, και δορασι τοις δια λογων αρχον- "των τε αρχουσι προσρηγνυντων, και λαων επι λαους κατασασι- "αζοντων." Eccl. Hiſt. l. viii. c. 1.

[d] See Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iv. c. 22.

See alſo in the ſame Hiſt. l. v. c. 20. an account of Irenæus' zeal in refuting hereſies.

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enemy was ready to deſtroy every profeſſor of Chriſtianity; it was not probable that there ſhould be many pretended converts to this Religion: and among its ſincere members leſs was to be feared from diſſenſion of opinion. Though therefore the ſpiritual paſtor was not exempt from much anxious labour in ſecuring his flock from internal hereſy; it muſt at this early period have been his principal care to guard it againſt the foreign enemy.

Accordingly, attempts were made at different times to obviate the ſlander, and to diſarm the malice, of the Heathen world by tranſlations of the Scriptures, and by repreſentations, in numerous [c] apologies, of the true principles of Chriſtianity. Theſe exertions did indeed at particular times produce the deſired effect: but the ceſſation of perſecution, which they produced, was uſually of very ſhort continuance.

[c] Quadratus and Ariſtides wrote apologies for the Chriſtian Religion and addreſſed them to Adrian. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iv. c. 3.

Various other apologies were written at different times on the ſame ſubject. Thoſe of Athenagoras and Melito compared with the apologies of Tertullian aud Juſtin Martyr have greatly the advantage. Jortin ſays the latter are the performances of very clowns compared with the former—Note on his Rem. on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 85.

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It was [f]inferred before the commencement of the fifth century from figurative and fanciful explanations of Scripture that ten general perſecutions were to befall the Church. Hence perſecutions have been magnified or extenuated, as might beſt ſerve to mark out with diſtinction the number which was to be completed. And hence alſo modern Sceptics have been led to queſtion the reality of every ſuch extraordinary perſecution. But the conſe-

[f] Sulpicius Severus, who died about the beginning of the fifth century, ſays "Etenim ſacris vocibus decem plagis mundum afficiendum pronunciatum eſt." Sac. Hiſt. l. ii. c. 48. p. 370. 8vo. Ed. 1665.

Auguſtine and Oroſius, according to the opinions of their times, refer for Scriptural prefigurations on the ſubject to the ten plagues of Egypt, and the ten oppoſitions which Moſes encountered from the Egyptians. Auguſtine enumerates the dates of ten perſecutions of the Chriſtians before the time of Conſtantine and ſays: "plagas enim Ægyptiorum, quoniam decem fuerunt antequam inde exire inciperet populus Dei, putant ad hunc intellectum eſſe referendas, ut noviſſima Antichriſti perſecutio ſimilis videatur undecimæ plagæ qua Ægyptii, dum hoſtiliter ſequerentur Hebræos in mari rubro,— perierunt." De Civitat. Dei, l. xviii. c. 52. Oroſius recounts the ten perſecutions after Auguſtine and ſays explicitly, "Decem ibi contradictiones adverſus Moyſen, hic decem edicta adverſus Chriſtum," l. vii. c. 27. p. 533. Ed. Havercampi.

Beſides the part of Scripture, thus referred to by Auguſtine and Oroſius, others refer, but without better foundation, to Rev. xvii. 12—14. See on this ſubject Moſheim, vol. i. p. 72.

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quences, which have enſued from injudicious inferences drawn by the profeſſors of our Religion in its degenerate days, cannot juſtify us in rejecting the true hiſtory of its beſt and moſt [g] diſintereſted members; or in giving up the [h] argument, which ariſes in its favour from the extenſive ſufferings of its early profeſſors.

That there were general and grievous perſecutions of the early Chriſtians the [i] beſt-informed writers declare. Theſe perſecutions alſo continued in a greater or leſs degree from their firſt [k] commencement to the civil eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity. Intolerance, once raiſed among Heathen nations to the extravagance of inflicting the moſt cruel death on the

[g] S. Severus ſays, p. 368. "Certatim in glorioſa certa-
"mina ruebatur, multoque avidius tum martyria glorioſis
"mortibus quærebantur, quam nunc Epiſcopatus pravis
"ambitionibus appetuntur."

[h] "The wonderful behaviour of the ancient Chriſtians
"may juſtly be accounted a proof of the truth of our Reli-
"gion; and we ſhould deſerve to be blamed and deſpiſed,
"if we parted with it and gave it up tamely on account
"of a few objections." Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 149.

[i] Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, aud others, whoſe names may be ſeen in the Prolegomena to Cave's Hiſt. Liter. p. 38. See alſo on this ſubject at large Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. viii. c. 1—14. and Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, vol. i. p. 195. 3d Ed.

[k] The perſecutions of Chriſtians commenced under Nero—S. Severus, p. 350.

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peaceable profeſſors of a Religion, the moſt pure, and the moſt determined in requiring its followers to abſtain from the rites of idolatrous worſhippers and in endeavouring by every means to convert them to the ſervice of the living God, could not be expected to ſubſide for any conſiderable time, while the civil power continued in oppoſition to the truth and the ſame difference of religious opinion was zealouſly maintained.

It might indeed at times be reſtrained by the interpoſition of humanity or the juſtice of public authority. But ſuperſtition, being always ready to cruſh its enemies by force, in proportion as it is unable to defend itſelf by reaſon, would eagerly embrace every opportunity of returning to perſecution. Accordingly, we find that it was not ſufficient for the Roman Emperours on particular occaſions to repeal the laws enacted againſt Chriſtians; they were compelled [1]farther to decree ſevere penalties againſt their accuſers.—So forward was the zeal of Polytheiſm to bring to puniſhment the deſerters or the deſpiſers of its public inſtitutions!

But it was only for ſhort intervals that the accuſation of an innocent Chriſtian was deem-

[1] This was done by Adrian and Antoninus Pius. Euſ. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iv. c. 9. 13. See alſo S. Severus, p. 365.

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ed criminal. During the reign of ſome of the moſt celebrated Emperours it was regarded as highly meritorious. And though, from the extraordinary blaze of particular perſecutions, ſome countenance may be given to a numerical partition of them; yet it may ſafely be aſſerted that Chriſtianity was in a [m] general ſtate of perſecution from the days of Nero to thoſe of Conſtantine, and that this cruelty was rather remitted at particular times, than the toleration of our Religion diſturbed by any number of temporary perſecutions.

Nor ſhall we have any doubt that it may be ſafely thus aſſerted, when we conſider the influence of large bodies of men, and that the Roman [n] Senate, as a body, was never favourable to Chriſtianity.

The ſuſpenſion of theſe perſecutions, upon repreſentations of the real principles of Chriſtianity, proves that their violence was often owing to the malicious and ignorant ſlanders of its enemies; and, towards the concluſion, of none perhaps more than of Celſus.

But, however much we may deplore the diſtreſſes in which the early Chriſtians were

[m] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 56.

[n] "Marcus Aurelius and other Emperours not void of "good qualities oppreſſed the Chriſtians to gain the "eſteem of the Senate; who, as a body, were never fa- "vourable to Chriſtianity." Jortin's Rem. vol. ii. p. 172.

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involved from the prevailing ignorance of their Religion; there were other evils derived from the ſame ſource, which ought not in the preſent times to be paſſed over leſs noticed or leſs lamented.

It has been inſultingly aſked by modern [o] unbelievers, whence it happened that ſo many of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous Heathens of thoſe early ages remained unconverted to Chriſtianity? Theſe Heathens paid no ſerious attention to the evidences of our Religion. The Chriſtian ſect, as we are [p] informed by an inhabitant of Rome, was every where ſpoken againſt; and from thence its pretenſions were not fairly examined. "The religious tenets "of the Galileans or Chriſtians," even Mr. Gibbon [q] declares, "were never made a ſubject "of puniſhment nor of inquiry."

Moreover, he himſelf [r] allows the Chriſtians to be "the friends of mankind;" though Tacitus [s] informs us that the Romans conſidered them in a diametrically oppoſite light; "that "the Romans condemned them not ſo much "for the crime of ſetting fire to the city, as "for their hatred of mankind." Tacitus therefore, according to Mr. Gibbon, at once ſupplies us with a proof of the ignorance of the

[o] See Gibbon's Hiſt. vol. i. p. 516.
[p] Acts xxxviii. 32.
[q] Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 537.
[r] Ibid. p. 537.
[s] Annal. l. xv. c. 44.

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Romans with regard to the Chriſtians, and with a preſumptive proof alſo of ſuch a prejudice in this people againſt them from their ſuppoſed hatred of mankind, as muſt effectually indiſpoſe all, who were influenced by it, for any proper inquiry into their Religion.

In reality the Jews and Chriſtians were either [t] confounded together at this period, or at moſt thought ſects of the ſame Religion: and the charge of ignorance and ſuperſtition, with which the Jews had ever been branded, was indiſcriminately applied to both. It was

[t] This appears from what Suetonius ſays of the expulſion of the Jews (or Chriſtians) from Rome: "Judæos, "impulſore Chreſto, aſſidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." In Vita Claudii, c. 25.

The ſame appears to have been the caſe alſo with regard to the Jews and Egyptians. Mr. Hume aſſerts (Note on his Eſſays, vol. ii. p. 461.) "that ancient writers of the "greateſt genius (Tacitus and Suetonius) were not able to "obſerve any difference between the Egyptian and the "Jewiſh Religion." If ſo, how miſerably ignorant muſt they have been on the ſubject! And what opinion muſt Tacitus have had of the Chriſtians, whom he probably did not ſeparate from the Jews: when he joins the latter with the Egyptians and ſays—"Actum et de ſacris Ægyptiis "Judaiciſque pellendis; factumque patrum Conſultum ut "quatuor millia libertini generis ea ſuperſtitione infecta, "queis idonea ætas, in inſulam Sardiniam veherentur "coercendis illic latrociniis, et ſi ob gravitatem cœli inter-"iiſſent, vile damnum: Cæteri cederent Italia niſi cer-"tam ante diem profanos ritus exuiſſent?" Ann. l. ii. c. 85.

therefore

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therefore thought needleſs by Heathen pride to examine into the evidences of a Religion, which it was every where taken for granted was falſe. And the ſame contemptuous [u] indifference with regard to the diſputes of Jews and Chriſtians about words, and names, and their law; which Gallio, [v] Seneca's brother, openly profeſſed when he was Deputy of Achaia, was the common method of treating Chriſtianity among the philoſophers of thoſe days.

We have a remarkable proof of this in the younger Pliny's well-known Epiſtle to Trajan. No mention occurs throughout the whole of any inquiry which had been made into the foundation of the Chriſtian Religion. Nothing farther had at all been inquired into, than the behaviour of its profeſſors. Of this Pliny was called upon to take cognizance, as a civil magiſtrate. Even to have examined into the general pretenſions of their Religion might have appeared to admit the poſſibility, at leaſt, of its truth; a conceſſion, humiliating to the pride of a [w] philoſopher, and dangerous to the intereſts of a dependant on a Heathen court. Without any ſuch examination therefore he

[u] Acts xviii. 15. [v] Tacit. Annal. l. xv. c. 73.
[w] See Bp. Warburton's Julian, p. 22.

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profeſſes at once "[x] he had not the leaſt doubt, "whatever were their confeſſion, that their "ſtubbornneſs and inflexible obſtinacy ought "certainly to be puniſhed."

Indeed the very names, by which Heathen writers diſtinguiſh Chriſtianity, afford abundant proof of their ignorance of it. Who, that knows any thing of the real nature of our Religion, can think when [y] Pliny calls it "Su-"perſtitio prava et immodica," [z] Tacitus "ex-"itiabilis Superſtitio," and Suetonius "[a] Su-"perſtitio nova et malefica;" that they had at all inquired into the Religion, which they thus malevolently and erroneouſly [b] characterize? And what reaſonable man can join with the unbelievers, above alluded to, in [c] expecting that the miraculous appearances of nature recorded in the Scriptures of our Religion ſhould, if true, be mentioned by ſuch writers; any

[x] "Neque dubitabam, qualecunque eſſet quod fatere-ntur, pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obſtinationem debere puniri."

[y] Epiſt. l. x. Ep. 97. [z] Annal. l. xv. c. 44.

[a] In Nerone, c. 16.

[b] See concerning the different calumnies, which were thus propagated with regard to Chriſtianity and its profeſſors, the paſſages cited at large from the Apologiſts and various other early writers in the four firſt chapters of Cave's "Primitive Chriſtianity."

[c] See Gibbon's Hiſt. v. i. p. 518.

more

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more than that they ſhould themſelves become its converts?

Eſpecially too, as we know that theſe are not the only remarkable circumſtances of [d]Eaſtern hiſtory which European writers have paſſed over in ſilence. We know that they ſay nothing even of the [e]exiſtence of cities of Syria, the moſt magnificent that imagination can conceive. But indeed what compariſon can there ever be between the ſilence of

[d] The darkneſs at our Saviour's crucifixion appears to have been a circumſtance confined to Eaſtern hiſtory. For the γη (Matt. xxvii. 45.) over which it was ſpread, does not neceſſarily include more than the land of Judæa. And there alſo it was by no means total; ſince, at the time when the miracle was wrought, it did not hinder the perſons around the croſs from ſeeing our Saviour and each other diſtinctly. Bp. Warburton in his Julian obſerves (p. 69, 70.) on a Jewiſh writer, who ſays that at the time of the defeat of Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem "there was an earthquake over all "the Earth:" "The Hiſtorian's calling it an earthquake "over all the earth is in the language of the Jews, and "the ſame with that of the Evangeliſt, who tells us that "at the crucifixion there was darkneſs over all the "earth."

[e] Volney ſays, "that Balbec is mentioned only by one "writer, John of Antioch, who attributes the building of "it to Antoninus Pius." Travels Engl. Edit. vol. ii. p. 245. —And that the world had very confuſed ideas of the power and grandeur which Palmyra had poſſeſſed. "They "were ſcarcely even ſuſpected in Europe till towards the "end of the laſt century." Vol. ii. p. 277.

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remote and inattentive philoſophers and the poſitive teſtimony of eye-witneſſes?

If any actual inquiry into theſe and the other miracles of Chriſtianity be ſuppoſed to have been made by the writers in queſtion; their ſilence will in that caſe become a powerful argument in its favour. Surely, if they inquired into the miraculous proofs of our Religion; they either found thoſe proofs fictitious or not. If fictitious; many reaſons may be aſſigned why they ſhould expoſe the fiction to the world, whether they were good or bad men. But if on the contrary they did not find them fictitious; if good men, they muſt themſelves profeſs the Chriſtian Faith, and thenceforth becoming its advocates expoſe their teſtimony to the imputation of partiality: or, if bad men, they would, to act moſt conſiſtently with worldly policy, paſs the whole over in ſilence. For, to ſuppoſe that a good man ſhould admit the truth of a miracle and not believe the doctrine which it confirms, or that a bad man ſhould bear witneſs to a circumſtance which condemns himſelf, is equally unreaſonable. If therefore the ſilence of the unconverted philoſopher operate at all with regard to our Religion; it muſt operate powerfully in its favour.

That before the civil eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity

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tianity many Heathen philoſophers were diſtinguiſhed by ſuch a converſion to its belief, as might be expected from the inquiries of thoſe good men among them who did not find its evidences fictitious, is [f] indiſputable. Their inquiries alſo were often excited in a manner the moſt creditable to our Religion. In the ſchools of their celebrated Leaders theſe philoſophers had been inſtructed concerning the excellency of virtue, and had heard of its ſuperiority to all worldly affliction and even to death itſelf. But the ſchools, which they frequented, could ſupply them with the [g] theory only of this heroiſm.

When therefore they ſaw their admired ſpeculations realized in Chriſtian Martyrs; when they ſaw illiterate crowds preſs forward with eagerneſs to meet ſufferings, which it would have been the moſt ardent wiſh of other men to avoid; when they ſaw alſo that ſtedfaſtneſs in ſuffering, which they had before thought to be more than human, diſplay itſelf in [h] women

[f] See Arnobius adv. Gentes, l. ii. p. 44: and Grotius de Verit. l. ii. c. 4.

[g] Plato is ſuppoſed to have obſcured his doctrines that he might not fall under the ſentence of Socrates. And Ariſtotle is known to have fled from Athens for the ſame reaſon. See Origen againſt Celſus, l. i. c. 65.—Paris 1733.

[h] See Dodwell De fortitudine Martyrum, in his 12th diſſertation on St. Cyprian.

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and children; they were diveſted of the common [i] prejudices againſt the ſufferers and [k] led to inquire into the foundation of this unuſual fortitude. And their inquiries, thus ultimately directed to the miraculous evidences of our Religion, often ended in a profeſſion of the ſame Faith and a diſplay of the ſame fortitude. —Such was the converſion of Tertullian; and ſuch the converſion and glorious [l] death alſo of Juſtin Martyr.

From ſome indeed of theſe converts aroſe evils of the moſt ſerious conſequence to Chriſtianity. The prejudices, incident to human nature, ſuffered not all the new and philoſophical believers in our Religion to ſacrifice the learning of their ſchools to its ſolemn, but ſimple, truths. Hence numerous ſects of both

[i] Juſtin Martyr ſays, "Αυτος εγω τοις Πλατωνος χαιρων "διδαγμασι διαβαλλομενους ακουων Χριστιανους, ὁρων δε και αφο- "βους προς θανατον και παντα τα νομιζομενα φοβερα, ενενοουν "αδυνατον ειναι εν κακια και φιληδονια ὑπαρχειν αυτους· τις γαρ "φιληδονος η ακρατης και ανθρωπινων σαρκων βοραν ηγουμενος "αγαθον, δυναιτ' αν θανατον ασπαζεσθαι ὁπως των αυτου αγα- "θων στερηθῃ, κ. τ. λ." Juſtin's 1ſt Apol. p. 50. edit. Par. 1615. See alſo Lactantius de Juſtit. l. v. c. 13.

[k] Tertullian ſays of the ſufferings of Chriſtians, "Quis "enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requiren- "dum quid intus in re ſit? Quis non, ubi requiſivit, "accedit? Ubi acceſſit, pati exoptet?" Apol. ad finem.

[l] See an account of Juſtin Martyr's death in Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iv. c. 16.

Gnoſtic

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[m] Gnoſtic and Platonic Chriſtians, or of Chriſtians who mingled human knowledge of different kinds with divine Revelation in their religious tenets: hence Revelation was wreſted to ſupport fanciful conjectures, [n] hereſies were introduced, the peace of the infant Church diſturbed, and a foundation laid for thoſe numberleſs diſſentions, which added (as was before remarked) to the anxiety of Chriſtian Paſtors during the time of perſecution, and prevented them in future ages from enjoying the happy effects of toleration and eſtabliſhment.

That however a very conſiderable proportion of the converts to Chriſtianity during the three firſt centuries conſiſted of men of illiterate education can be no diſcredit to that Religion, of which it was a diſtinguiſhing mark, that "the poor had the Goſpel preached unto them."

[m] Mr. Bingham ſays that the term "Gnoſtic" was originally applied in a good ſenſe to Chriſtians, as to thoſe who were poſſeſſed of the beſt knowledge; but that it was afterwards aped and abuſed by others. Antiquities, b. 1. c. 1. ſect. 3.

[n] Jortin obſerves that moſt of the ancient hereſies were a mixture of philoſophy, Greek or Oriental, and Chriſtianity—Remarks, vol. ii. p. 266. And again, "the philoſophers who paſſed from Judaiſm and Paganiſm to Chriſtianity corrupted the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, turned it into a contentious Religion, and filled it with unedifying ſpeculations." Vol. ii. p. 273.

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The Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors, in general, were men of this ſort. They were, in general, remarkable neither for their learning nor for their eloquence. They expreſs the moſt pious ſentiments in the moſt ſimple language and the moſt important truths without ornament. But the piety of their ſentiments and the truth of their doctrines were ſufficient under Providence to make their Religion prevail: and, in ſpite of all oppoſition, it continued in ſucceſſive ages to prevail with the maſs of mankind by the conviction of [o] honeſt and humble attention; till thoſe great men, who were not to be allured by its own excellence, found it expedient from worldly motives to come over to its ſide; being influenced in this moſt important of all concerns by the conduct of an illiterate multitude and not by the diſcoveries of their own ſuperior [p] wiſdom.

This is the great argument, which is inferred in favour of our Religion from its peculiar mode of propagation. The argument is not inferred from any number of wiſe or powerful men, who embraced Chriſtianity in this or that place at any given time; but from the triumph which it obtained over the wiſdom

[o] See the Introduction to Bp. Warburton's Julian, p. 26.

[p] See the ſame, p. 25.

and

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and power of the world by a proceſs, contrary to what was ever obſerved in the ſucceſs of any other inſtitution: "the fooliſh things of "the world were choſen [q] to confound the "wiſe, and the weak to confound the things "which are mighty."

But in reality the truth of Chriſtianity, and the ſatisfaction reſulting from a conviction of that truth, are very little concerned in the inquiries which at preſent form a conſiderable part of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory during the firſt ages of our Religion; in inquiries concerning the miracles aſcribed to the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, concerning the extent of the early propagation of our Religion, the extent of the perſecution of its profeſſors, and the reaſons from the beginning why it was not generally received by men of learning, and why univerſal mention was not made by them of its miraculous proofs. Theſe are ſubjects, on which the enemies of our Faith have been able to avail themſelves of the errors, the omiſſions, and other imperfections, of its friends as well as foes. With them therefore theſe are favourite topics of declamation; and from thence they neceſſarily make a part of thoſe ſubſequent obſervations on the hiſtory of our Religion which are intended to vindicate its truth.

[q] 1 Cor. i. 27.

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It is ſufficient with regard to the original propagation of Chriſtianity; at leaſt indeed it is ſufficient for our ſatisfaction, as far as the foundation of our Faith is concerned in this important part of its hiſtory; if we are informed—that the publication of our Religion was entruſted, after the aſcenſion of its great Author, to poor and illiterate men who had been his Diſciples and witneſſes from the beginning:—that theſe men were enabled by ſupernatural means to confirm the truth of their doctrines and to preach the Goſpel to all nations:—that their induſtry was proportioned to the importance of their commiſſion and to their means of ſucceſs:—that numbers were converted by their preaching:—that, by the miracles performed before the expiration of the apoſtolical age, by the writings of the New in addition to thoſe of the Old Teſtament, and by inſtitutions appointed for the public profeſſion of our Religion, proviſion was made for its regular and permanent maintenance among its converts; and for the converſion of men of every age to its belief, without the aid and in oppoſition to all the efforts of human power and human wiſdom:—and that all thoſe, who were thus employed at firſt to publiſh and confirm the doctrines of Chriſtianity, having before given up every proſpect in this world for its ſake, at length, when

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when brought to the [r]trial, chearfully laid down their lives in atteſtation of its truth; leaving to lateſt poſterity the moſt unequivocal aſſurance of the reality of the miraculous events, recorded by them in the New Teſtament, which had been the objects of their ſenſes and the original foundation of their faith.

Few as theſe circumſtances are, they comprehend in reality all the information concerning the firſt propagation of our Religion, which reaſonable men can think neceſſary for the confirmation of its truth.

As to all other miracles beſides thoſe which are recorded in Holy Writ, they are not to be reckoned, as hath been fully declared, among the preſent proofs of our Religion. And though ſtrong arguments may be drawn in its favour from the extent of its early propagation, and from the extent of the perſecution which it overcame; even theſe are not to be conſidered as abſolutely neceſſary to our cauſe.

The various errors, whether with regard to fictitious miracles or ill-founded repreſentations of other ſorts, which were intermingled with the hiſtory of our Religion by its advocates,

[r] Every one of the Apoſtles was actually brought to the trial, except St. John. See the paſſage above cited from Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 275.

and

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and the diverſified oppoſition and contempt which it encountered from its enemies, prove only, what we every day experience, that Chriſtianity may be defended with little judgment, and that the moſt gracious offers may be rejected and inſulted.

Such however, as they are above ſketched, are the occurrences, whether they are all eſſential to the confirmation of our faith or not, which form the principal outlines of the Chriſtian hiſtory from its publication after the reſurrection of Chriſt to its eſtabliſhment by Conſtantine. During a period of nearly 300 years, our Religion, having been openly [s]profeſſed under the inſtitutions originally appointed for its maintenance, was expoſed to all thoſe calamities, which ariſe from the malice of powerful enemies and from imperfections of various kinds in miſguided friends. But, under every [t]diſadvantage, its intrinſic

[s] See Joſ. Mede's diſcourſe concerning Churches: Works, Book 2d, Edit. 1672:—and Cave's "Primitive "Chriſtianity."

[t] "Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory will ſhew us the amazing pro- "greſs of Chriſtianity through the Roman empire, "through the Eaſt and through the Weſt, during the "three firſt centuries: though the powers of this world "ſtrenuouſly oppoſed it; though poverty and infamy, "diſtreſs and oppreſſion, the loſs of friends, property, li- "berty, and life, were often the lot of its profeſſors." Jortin's 2d Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 382.

purity

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purity and external evidences, aided by the influence of the Holy Spirit, made it go on and gain ſtrength; till Conſtantine, encouraged and perhaps perſuaded by the [u] number of his Chriſtian ſubjects, proclaimed himſelf a convert and guardian of Chriſtianity.

From his time, notwithſtanding the apoſtaſy of one ſucceeding Emperour and the profligacy of many more, we may affirm that Kings became its [x] nurſing fathers and Queens its nurſing mothers. Having raiſed itſelf to the favourable attention of Princes by the poſſeſſion, which it had before taken of their ſubjects' hearts, it has thenceforward received protection from them; and has itſelf in return protected both their perſons and authority.

[u] Cave proves that in the reign of Dioclefian there were above forty Baſilicæ or Churches in Rome only. Cave's "Primitive Chriſtianity," vol. i. p. 133.

And Dr. Powell ſays, in oppoſition to many of our modern writers, that, "when Conſtantine aſcended the "throne, the Chriſtian party was equal, perhaps ſuperior, "to their adverſaries through the whole Empire." 10th Sermon, p. 165.

[x] If. xlix. 23.

SERMON

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SERMON III.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

THE preſent diſcourſe is to carry our obſervations on the hiſtory of our Religion from the eſtabliſhment of it by Conſtantine to the commencement of the Reformation.

The eſtabliſhment of our holy Religion by Conſtantine without doubt filled the minds of its ſincere profeſſors with the pureſt joy. Whoever conſidered the excellence of the Religion itſelf, and the protection which it was now to receive from the civil power, might well be led with pious fervour to imagine that the bleſſings, with which it was uſhered in, were thenceforth to receive their accompliſhment; that thenceforth [a]glory would be given

[a] Luke ii. 14.

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to God in the higheſt, and that on earth there would be peace and good will towards men.

Indeed to this period [b] is referred the glorious triumph of the Church, celebrated in the ſeventh Chapter of the Revelation of St. John.

But the depravity of the human heart from the beginning oppoſed itſelf to its remedy, and infected not only the unlearned part of Chriſtians, but the teachers of Chriſtianity themſelves; thus making way for general and permanent corruptions. Among the Apoſtles we have a Judas Iſcariot. In the ages immediately ſubſequent, and among the rulers alſo of the Church, aroſe men of perverſe minds and totally unworthy of their ſacred ſtation. But the number of unworthy rulers, no leſs than the general number of inſincere and unworthy profeſſors of our Religion, was reſtrained in the early ages by perſecution, and is ſmall, when compared with the ſwarms of both, which under the future and peaceable ſtate of the Church were more zealous to partake of its [c] emoluments than to promote in any reſpect its ſpiritual intereſts.

As ſoon as Biſhops were [d] elected by intrigues

[b] See Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 74—77.

[c] S. Severus, p. 368. Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 178.

[d] This cenſure ought not to be equally applied to all the Biſhops of this period. When Ammianus Marcellinus

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and embarked in the ſupport of factions, the qualifications for their high rank, and a proper demeanour in it, were no longer diſtinguiſhing parts of their character. Different Princes contended for temporal power; and different Biſhops graſped as [e] contentiouſly at each other's eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction. One pernicious conſequence of theſe conteſts is to be lamented in the want of purity, which during the contention and in ſucceeding times prevailed throughout the Chriſtian world.

The profeſſion of Chriſtianity was indeed extended. The converſion of many nations

linus ſpeaks of the manner of obtaining Biſhopricks, and of the luxury of Biſhops; he ſays there was a very great difference between the Biſhops of cities and thoſe of provinces. "Neque ego abnuo oſtentationem rerum con-
"ſiderans urbanarum, hujus rei cupidos ob impetrandum
"quod appetunt omni contentione laterum jurgari de-
"bere: quum id adepti futuri ſunt ita ſecuri ut ditentur
"oblationibus matronarum, procedantque vehiculis inſi-
"dentes, circumſpecte veſtiti, epulas curantes profuſas,
"adeo ut eorum convivia regales ſuperant menſas. Qui
"eſſe poterant beati revera, ſi, magnitudine urbis deſpecta
"quam vitiis opponunt, ad imitationem antiſtitum quo-
"rundam provincialium viverent; quos tenuitas edendi
"potandique parciſſime, vilitas etiam indumentorum et
"ſupercilia humum ſpectantia perpetuo numini veriſque
"ejus cultoribus ut puros commendant et verecundos."
C. xxvii. p. 458. edit. 1558.

[e] Euſebius mentions the conteſts, which prevailed in the Church, "αρχοντων αρχουσι" even before the reign of Conſtantine, Hiſt. Eccl. l. viii. c. 1.

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was begun long after the Chriſtian eſtabliſhment by Conſtantine. Among many nations alſo, which had before partially profeſſed the Chriſtian Faith, much was done to render the profeſſion of it univerſal. But, the fountains from which Chriſtianity flowed being corrupt, we cannot wonder if the doctrines, which were propagated under its authority, ſhould thenceforth be impure. Beſides a deficiency in enforcing moral duties, even religious doctrines were perverted and made matter of party-violence. [f] Hereſies of the moſt pernicious tendency were propagated with cruel perſecutions of the contrary Faith; whilſt on the other hand [g] little differences of opinion were maliciouſly conſtrued into damnable hereſies.

This ſpirit of contention in the rulers of the Church found no ſmall encouragement and ſupport in the learning of the times. It hath been [h] before remarked that many philo-

[f] Arianiſm was enforced in this manner under Conſtantius, Valens, &c. And, as Bp. Sherlock obſerves, the great Arian controverſy yielded as ſevere trials to Chriſtians as they had ever before experienced. Sermons, vol. iii. p. 358.

See on this ſubject Sozomen, Hiſt. Eccl. l. vi. c. 18. and Socrates, l. iv. c. 16.

[g] See the objections urged by Michael Cerularius againſt the Latin Church, Moſh. vol. ii. p. 556.

[h] See the preceding ſermon.

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ſophers were found among the early converts to Chriſtianity. More ſucceeded them in ſubſequent ages. In the doctrine of the Trinity, and in the doctrines of Revelation which relate to the fall of man and the operation of evil ſpirits, theſe philoſophers found a [i] reſemblance to the tenets of their reſpective ſchools. When therefore they embraced Chriſtianity, they did not think it neceſſary to relinquiſh the [k] language of their former tenets; if indeed they relinquiſhed [l] all the tenets themſelves.

From a ſtudiouſneſs to reconcile ſuch lan-

[i] Philo, an Helleniſtic Jew of Alexandria, who lived at the ſame time with the Apoſtles and who is ſaid by ſome to have been an apoſtate Chriſtian, prepared the way, by his ingenious but fanciful combinations of the Jewiſh Scriptures with the Platonic philoſophy, for ſimilar corruptions of Chriſtianity. Photius ſays, that he was the writer "εξ ου και πας ο αλληγορικος της γραφης εν εκκλησια "λογος εσχεν αρχην εισρυηναι."

See the part of Photius prefixed to the Paris Edit. of Philo.

See alſo what Biſhop Bull ſays of Philo: Engliſh Works, vol. iii. p. 1126. 8vo.

[k] Biſhop Horſley's Tracts, 8vo. 1789. p. 68.

[l] See what Biſhop Warburton ſays on this ſubject in the introduction to his "Julian," where he deduces the corruptions of our Religion in the dark ages "from the "adulterate ornaments which the ſucceſſors of the Apo- "ſtolic fathers brought from the brothels of philoſophy "to adorn the ſanctity of Religion," p. 24—34.

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guage with their new Religion much curious and typical reaſoning was introduced. This reaſoning at firſt ſerved to ſhelter the prejudices of individuals. It was afterwards regarded as a creditable diſplay of [m] literary attainments. And, as it had been adopted by men of known [n] attachment to Chriſtianity, it was generally thought to detract nothing

[m] Clemens Alexandrinus compoſed his "Stromata" from the Scriptures and Heathen writers. His own words with regard to his work are very remarkable: "περιεξουσι δε οἱ Στρωματεις αναμεμιγμενην την αληθειαν τοις "φιλοσοφιας δογμασι· μαλλον εγκεκαλυμμενην και επικεκρυμμε- "νην, καθαπερ τῳ λεπυρῳ το εδωλιμον του καρυου," l. 1. c. 1.

Tertullian ſays, "Ipſæ denique hæreſes a philoſophia "ſubordinantur:" and again at the concluſion of the ſame chapter, "viderint qui Stoicum et Platonicum, et "Dialecticum Chriſtianiſmum protulerint." Adv. Hær. c. 7.

In what manner the philoſophers of the early ages ſtudied Chriſtianity may be inferred alſo from what Cave ſays of them at the Nicene Council, "ad hunc conven- "tum veniſſe quoſdam philoſophos ſive dialecticos de "rebus theologicis ſubtiliter diſputaturos." Hiſt. Liter. vol. i. p. 351.

[n] Such as Clemens Alexandrinus. Cyprian himſelf was ſo fond of myſtical interpretation, that Cave calls it "the argument which that good man produces as his "warrant to knock down a controverſy, when other ar- "guments were too weak to do it." Prim. Chriſt. vol. i. p. 350.

And even Ammonius, the maſter of Origen, is ſaid to have lived and died a Chriſtian. Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 501.

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from the Chriſtian character. This made way for more extenſive [o]accommodations of our Religion to human ſyſtems, and for ſuch explanations of its particular doctrines, as before its civil eſtabliſhment had blended almoſt every tenet of it with the reveries of philoſophical ſpeculatiſts.

After its civil eſtabliſhment theſe ſubjects of

[o] The Gnoſtic ſect, which began in the days of the Apoſtles, was extended in the ſecond century by Baſilides. He (as Moſheim ſays, vol. i. p. 223.) has generally obtained the firſt place among the Egyptian Gnoſtics: and is called by Cave "Gnoſticorum anteſignanus." (Hiſt. Lit. vol. i. p. 49.) He was followed by Valentine, Theodotus the tanner, and many others; among whom Manes "was ſo adventurous" (to uſe the words of Moſheim) "as to attempt a coalition of the doctrine of the "Magi with the Chriſtian ſyſtem or the explication of "the one by the other." Vol. i. p. 296.

Nor did Origen, who was the leader of the platonizing Chriſtians, derive his ſpeculations from a maſter, who had been leſs adventurous in the corruption of Chriſtianity than Manes himſelf. See Moſheim, vol. i. p. 169—174. Under Origen the platonizing Chriſtians ſoon eclipſed their Gnoſtic brethren.

"A prodigious number of interpreters both in the "third century and in the following times purſued the "method of Origen; nor could the few, who explain-"ed the Scriptures with judgment and a true ſpirit of "criticiſm, oppoſe the torrent of Allegory which was "overflowing the Church"—"Origen illuſtrated the "greateſt part of the doctrines of Chriſtianity, or to "ſpeak more properly diſguiſed them under the lines of "a vain philoſophy." Moſheim, vol. i. p. 278, 279.

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abuſe went on to [p] increaſe. Philoſophical Divinity was enlarged: and the ſtudy of philoſophy, which was neceſſary before this Divinity could be underſtood, was for that reaſon thought eſſential to Chriſtianity. And though the Platonic ſyſtem, which it had been the ſucceſsful aim of ages to incorporate with Chriſtianity and which had obſcured the philoſophy adopted by the Gnoſtics, was diſ-

[p] Moſheim ſays of the fourth century: "Origen was "the great model, whom the moſt eminent of the Chriſ-"tian doctors followed in their explications of the truths "of the Goſpel, which were of conſequence explained "according to the rules of the Platonic philoſophy, as it "was corrected and modelled by that learned father." Vol. i. p. 369.

Under this cenſure he includes Jerome, Hilary, Euſebius, Ephraim the Syrian, Chryſoſtom, Athanaſius, and Didymus.

And ſo prevalent in theſe ages was the cuſtom of diſguiſing or ſecreting the doctrines of Chriſtianity that Cave tells us, Chryſoſtom, in ſpeaking of the myſterious parts of our Religion, uſes the words "ισασιν οι μεμυη-"μενοι" at leaſt fifty times in his writings. Prim. Chriſt. vol. i. p. 213. See alſo on this ſubject Bingham's Antiquities, b. x. c. 5. ſect. 8.

In the following ages the moſt learned commentators did in general nothing more than tranſcribe the Divinity of their predeceſſors. "The greater part of them rea-"ſoned and diſputed concerning the truths of the Goſpel, "as the blind would argue about light and colours," &c. Moſh. vol. ii. p. 128. Accounts of them may be ſeen in different parts of Moſheim's ſecond and third Volumes. See alſo Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 152.

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credited by the condemnation of ſome of its principal advocates and was at length aboliſhed by Juſtinian; yet it only made way for the Ariſtotelic, a philoſophy better calculated to promote and regulate theological diſputations.

The effects of the intermixture of philoſophy with Chriſtianity were not eaſily to be done away. Men had not merely availed themſelves of the aſſiſtance of human ſcience in the explication of Chriſtianity; they had confounded both together, and had produced a jargon of philoſophical Divinity which tended irreſiſtibly to deſtroy all diſtinct ideas of each, conſidered as a ſeparate and independent ſtudy. Their minds had been called off from a ſimple conſideration of the doctrines of Revelation: and, however their ſyſtem might be diverted from [q]Plato to Ariſtotle, and from Ariſtotle to St. [r]Auguſtine, to Peter [s]Lombard, or to any other father or doctor of

[q] As late as the middle of the 15th century there was a conteſt whether the doctrines of Plato or Ariſtotle ſhould be preferred: and Jortin ſays, "I much fear it "would be doing no wrong to the literati of thoſe days "to ſuppoſe they had no other eſoteric Religion, than "what they drew from Plato or Ariſtotle." Rem. vol. v. p. 490.

[r] Moſh. Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 424.

[s] Dean Tucker in his letters to Dr. Kippis ſays, "it is "an undoubted fact that Peter Lombard's ſumma ſententiarum was in ſuch high vogue for ſeveral ages, as to "eclipſe the Scriptures themſelves." P. 81.

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the Church; their attention was with difficulty afterwards to be attached to the holy Scriptures, and to the pure Religion which they teach.

This certainly was an eſſential cauſe of thoſe faults, which may be diſcovered in the venerable writings of the uninſpired profeſſors of our Religion in its early ages, and of the various hereſies and general corruption of Chriſtianity from the days of Ammonius and his ſcholar Origen down to that ſcholaſtic Theology, whoſe jargon did ſo much miſchief in the Church during the latter part of the dark ages. The profeſſors of Chriſtianity [t] forſook

[t] In the prolegomena to Cave's Hiſt. Lit. p. 2. we are informed "Sacrarum Scripturarum ſtudium contemptui "habitum, neglectum, et in lingua vulgari prohibitum. "Biblia ſacra raro viſa, rarius tractata, adeo ut ſemel ite- "rumque teſtatur Eraſmus ſe producere poſſe qui annum "egreſſi octogeſimum tantum ætatis in hujuſmodi tricis "(ſcilicet Theologia ſcholaſtica) perdiderint, nec unquam "contextum evangelicum evolverint: idque ſe propria "experientia quin et ipſis etiam fatentibus comperiſſe."

Stafford of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge is ſaid in 1524. to have been the firſt, who publicly read lectures out of the Scriptures, whereas before they read only the ſentences. Strype's Memorials, vol. i. p. 48. Conſiſtently with this Eraſmus ſays, "Ante annos ferme triginta nihil "tradebatur in ſchola Cantabrigienſi præter Alexandrum, "parva logicalia (ut vocant) et vetera illa Ariſtotelis dic- "tata, Scoticaſque quæſtiones."—Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, p. 49, 50.

What books were at length uſed in common life inſtead

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the living fountains, and hewed out for themſelves ciſterns which could hold no water. Had they conſulted the Scriptures inſtead of the expoſitions of philoſophers and the [u]perplexed reaſonings of prejudiced men; it would have been impoſſible that the doctrines, which engaged the ſtudy of their lives, ſhould have formed any part of their creed. But the men of authority in the Church (as I have above remarked) were contending for worldly preeminence, and in a manner which was not to be defended upon Goſpel-principles.

It ought not therefore to be matter of wonder that they ſhould rather [x]avail themſelves

ſtead of the Scriptures may be inferred from hence. "Engliſhmen" (we are told in No. 47. of the collection of records, vol. ii. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt.) "have in their hands "the holy Bible and the New Teſtament in the Mother "Tongue inſtead of the old fabulous and phantaſtical "books of the Table Round, Launcelot de Lake, Huou "de Bourdeux, Beſy of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, and "other ſuch; whoſe impure filth and vain fabuloſity the "light of God has aboliſhed."

[u] Peter Abelard and his followers in the 12th century explained nothing, but obſcured the cleareſt truths by diſtinctions and ſubdiviſions. Jortin's Rem. vol. v. p. 262.

[x] Theophilus, Biſhop of Alexandria, conſecrated Syneſius, a learned Platonic philoſopher, Biſhop of Ptolemais; though he declined the Biſhoprick, declaring that he was a Platoniſt, and could not receive ſome of the doctrines of Chriſtianity. Jortin's Rem. vol. iv. p. 243, 244.

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of the learning of the times, than recall men of learning to the ſtudy of genuine Chriſtianity: it ought not to be matter of wonder that they ſhould not command philoſophers to bring their diſcordant opinions to the teſt of infallible truth. On the contrary, it was certainly part of the artifice of the Romiſh Church to [y] prohibit the uſe of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue and the ordinary expoſition of them; a fatal artifice, in which, as well as in many others, it was equalled by the [z] Greek Communion, which taught that the Patriarch of Conſtantinople and his brethren were alone authoriſed to explain the declarations of Scripture.

Human learning ſuffered little leſs in the end from this confuſion of ſacred and profane knowledge, than the ſtudy of the Scriptures. Before the expiration of the fourth century it

y See in "Stillingfleet's council of Trent examined and "diſproved," an account of the ſteps by which the uſe of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was denied to the people. Having been partially reſtrained by particular Popes it was publicly forbidden by the Lateran council under Innocent the Third, and at length finally and ſolemnly prohibited by the council of Trent, p. 51—58. And though Pius the Fourth afterwards permitted the uſe of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue; yet this permiſſion was ſoon recalled by Pope Clement the Eighth. See the preface to King James's Bible, p. 3.

z Moſheim's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. iv. p. 249.

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was decreed in a public [a] council that Biſhops were not to read the books of Heathen writers. In the ſixth century the teaching of Philoſophy at Athens was aboliſhed by Juſtinian. And in proceſs of time the pureſt Greek and Latin Claſſics were eraſed to furniſh materials for tranſcribing legendary tales, made up of the moſt incongruous mixture of ſacred and profane ſpeculations; till at length it was maintained that polite [b] literature ought to be ſtigmatized and baniſhed, as the fountain of all hereſy.

To theſe internal cauſes of ignorance and corruption, which, though not univerſal, were at leaſt general in their operation, if we add the accumulated weight of all thoſe [c] foreign

[a] The 16th canon of the 4th council of Carthage, held in the year 398, decrees, "Epiſcopus gentilium libros "non legat."

[b] Eraſmus ſays, "Lovanii quidam non ſemel publicitus "dixit apud populum linguas et politiores literas eſſe fon-"tem omnium hæreſeôn, et ob id earum profeſſores fuſti-"bus ejiciendos ex academia;" and adds what is well worthy of our notice, "et tamen inter illos nullus erat qui "vel hiſceret adverſus Eccleſiæ decreta." Vol. ix. p. 531. Lugd. Bat. 1706.

[c] Of the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarous conquerors Burnet declares, "Theſe new conquerors being "rude, and ignorant, and wholly given to ſenſible things; "and learning being univerſally extinguiſhed; groſs ſu-"perſtitions took place."—Hiſt. of Ref. vol. ii. p. 63.

And Jortin ſays, that "an effect of the government of the

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invaſions, general conqueſts, and general importations of ſavage laws and ſavage manners; which rendered the times, of which I am ſpeaking, the moſt unfortunate period of human exiſtence; we ſhall not be ſurpriſed at finding that the means of mental improvement were at length ſo extenſively deſtroyed, as to leave ſeveral different monaſteries or ſchools of learning in poſſeſſion of no more than [c] two or three books for their common uſe; and we ſhall eaſily be able to account for the worſt evils of theſe times, and for the want of ſucceſs which attended all the well-meant [d] exertions that were made to diſperſe the impending cloud of ignorance and ſuperſtition.

Theſe obſervations, joined to others on what may be conſidered as the effects of ſuch a general ſtate of the Chriſtian world;—on the

" the barbarians in the Weſt was that the Biſhops and " the Clergy became hunters and fighters." Remarks, vol. v. p. 98.

[c] See the ſecond diſſertation prefixed by Warton to his Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry. In it he ſays, that " one " ſingle copy of the Bible, St. Jerome's Epiſtles, and " ſome volumes of Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory and martyrology " often ſerved ſeveral different monaſteries."

The libraries of the religious houſes in Syria are at preſent of nearly the ſame extent. Volney's Travels, vol. ii. p. 448. Engl. edit.

[d] By Alfred, Charlemagne, William the Conqueror, &c.

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riſe and eſtabliſhment of the pretenſions of the Romiſh Church, of which we at length formed a dependent part, and which conſpicuouſly preſerved and tranſmitted the regular profeſſion, whilſt it corrupted in many inſtances the purity, of Chriſtianity ;—on the Eaſtern Church, which was ſeparated through theſe pretenſions from Weſtern Chriſtendom and the influence of this ſeparation on both communions ;—and on as much beſides of the internal and external ſtate of the Church, as is contained within a ſhort view both of the doctrines of our Religion which it particularly defended or corrupted, and of the oppoſition which it encountered from foreign enemies ; may perhaps give us an imperfect ſketch of the religious hiſtory of this period : they certainly will contribute to free pure Chriſtianity from cenſure, and enable us to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh us a reaſon of the Hope that is in us ; as far as this Hope is connected with the part of religious hiſtory under our preſent conſideration.

That enormous aggregate of power, which was poſſeſſed by the Biſhops of Rome in the times immediately preceding the Reformation, was the effect in a great degree of the cauſes above ſtated : but it was not the production of a ſingle age, nor indeed the entire production of the ages which ſucceeded the time of Con-

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Conſtantine. It founded its preſumptuous claims on the authority which St. Peter was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs and to tranſmit to his ſucceſſors. Whatever be the meaning of the [e] words, which our Saviour addreſſed to St. Peter when this Apoſtle confeſſed that he was the Son of God; as they proceeded from one who had declared that his Kingdom was not of this world, they could not mean to confer temporal power upon the Apoſtle, nor is it probable that they were deſigned to confer any ſpiritual ſuperiority, much leſs any aſſurance of infallibility upon him.

Our bleſſed Saviour, as if to caution his Diſciples beforehand againſt the evils which would ariſe from diſputes among the future rulers of his Church "who ſhould be greateſt," expreſsly [f] forbad ſuch ambition among them; declaring that he who deſired to be firſt ſhould be laſt of all, and recommending to their imitation the unaſſuming ſimplicity of a little child. It is therefore exceedingly improbable, if not impoſſible, that he ſhould ſet up one of his Diſciples to be the ſpiritual head of all the others. He himſelf was to be the ſpiritual [g] Maſter to whom they were to look: and the Holy Ghoſt was to compenſate for

[e] Matt. xvi. 18.
[f] Mark ix. 34, &c.
[g] Matt. xxiii. 8.

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the want of his immediate and perſonal appearance by extraordinary gifts in the firſt ages, and by the inſpired writings which were an effect of thoſe gifts and were to ſupply their place in future times.

Conſiſtently with this, St. Peter appears to have had no precedence in the council of the Apoſtles at Jeruſalem. St. Paul alſo declares of himſelf that [h] "in nothing was he "behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles:" and he withſtood St. Peter to the face for a reaſon which deſtroys every idea of his infallibility, [i] "becauſe he was to be blamed." Beſides, St. Paul had the Goſpel of the [k] uncircumciſion committed to him in the ſame manner as that of the circumciſion was to St. Peter: and both he and the other Apoſtles appear at all times to act independently of every other ſpiritual head than Chriſt.

But of whatever nature St. Peter's authority and preeminence might be, they ought in reality to confer nothing of either on the Biſhops of Rome. [l] "It is doubtful whe-

[h] 2 Cor. xii. 11.

Again when St. Paul mentions (Gal. ii. 8.) James, Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be pillars, he makes no diſtinction in favour of Cephas (or Peter) nor does he mention him before the others.

[i] Gal. ii. 11. [k] Gal. ii. 7.

[l] Bp. Bull's Vindication of the Church of England, 8vo. P. 139.

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" ther St. Peter ever was at Rome; but that " he fixed his chair there is a very idle and " groundleſs imagination." Euſebius indeed ſays that St. Peter came to Rome in the days of Claudius: but he [m] ſeems to have received this from the authority of Papias, who was a credulous writer.

However in proceſs of time, as the dignity no leſs than the opulence of cities attaches itſelf to the perſons of thoſe who fill important ſtations in them; and as the Church of Rome was the [n] only Weſtern Church which aſpired to the credit of Apoſtolical foundation; the Biſhops of Rome began to be regarded with peculiar reſpect and a [o] titular kind of preeminence was tacitly allowed them.

Archbiſhop Cranmer alſo ſays it was not certain that St. Peter ever was at Rome. Burnet's Hiſt. of the Reformation, vol. i. p. 175.

Stillingfleet in his Orig. Britan. ſpeaks nearly to the ſame effect, concluding at length with an approbation of Lactantius's opinion that St. Peter certainly did not come to Rome till the reign of Nero nor long before his martyrdom, p. 45—48.

[m] Bp. Bull's vindication of the Church of England, p. 139. See concerning the credulity of Papias, Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iii. c. 39.

[n] See Waterland's Lady Moyer's Sermons, p. 326.

[o] Moſheim's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 264. That this preeminence was only titular may be inferred from hence: it was declared by the general council at Nice, that " the " Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch had the ſame " autho-

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St. Peter alſo, once preſumed to have been the firſt Biſhop of that See, was admitted in ſucceeding times to have been ſo without contradiction. And as appeals were made in civil matters from different parts of the Empire to the Imperial city; ſo they were alſo made in matters reſpecting Chriſtianity. Probably too theſe latter may be traced more frequently in the early ages; becauſe, notwithſtanding the corrupt ſtate of the Romiſh Church in ſubſequent times, it is notorious that ſhe was [p] ſingularly free from the early hereſies. The ſuppoſed ſucceſſors of St. Peter ſoon availed themſelves of the power, which theſe proofs of reſpect appeared to acknowledge in them; and proceeded to iſſue directions and menaces to diſtant parts of the Chriſtian world.

"authority over the countries round them, that he of "Rome had over thoſe that lay about that city." Burnet's Hiſt. of the Ref. vol. i. p. 138. And this titular preeminence the Greeks were to the laſt diſpoſed to admit, viz. "papam ordine, non dignitate præcedere." Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. Sæc. Synod. p. 234.

T. Smith alſo in his account of the Greek Church admits (p. 2.) a priority of Dignity in the See of Rome; though he aſſerts (p. 80.) the perfect equality of the Patriarch of Conſtantinople with the Pope.

[p] Sozomen, Hiſt. Eccl. l. iii. c. 6, and 13. and l. vi. c. 23. Reading's Edit.

Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 226.

Waterland's Lady Moyer's Sermons, p. 327.

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Theſe interpoſitions were by no means received with approbation or with ſilent acquieſcence. As early as in the ſecond century they excited the reſentment and cenſure [q] both of Irenæus and Polycrates. And in the third century [r] Cyprian oppoſed with great reſolution the incroachments of the Biſhops of Rome; refuſing as Biſhop of Carthage to defend himſelf in anſwer to an appeal which

[q] Ειρηναιος ὁ Δυγδουνου της εν Γαλλια επισκοπος του Βικτορος δι' επιϛολης γενναιως κατεδραμεν, μεμψαμενος αυτω την θερμοτητα, κ. τ λ. Socrates, Hiſt. Eccl. l. v. c. 22. Reading's Edit.

Polycrates expreſſed a ſimilar diſapprobation of the conduct of the Biſhop of Rome, and on the ſame occaſion. Heylyn's Reform. juſtified, p. 270.

[r] Cyprian ſays on the ſubject, "Statutum ſit omnibus "nobis et æquum ſit pariter ac juſtum, ut unius cujuſque "cauſa illic audiatur ubi eſt crimen admiſſum; et ſingulis "paſtoribus portio gregis ſit adſcripta, quam regat unuſ- "quiſque et gubernet, rationem ſui actus Domino reddi- "turus: oportet utique eos quibus præſumus non circum- "curſare nec epiſcoporum concordiam cohærentem ſua "ſubdola et fallaci temeritate collidere, ſed agere illic "cauſam ſuam, ubi et accuſatores habere et teſtes ſui "criminis poſſent." Epiſt. 55. Edit. Paris. 1726. p. 86.

And again he ſays, "habet in eccleſiæ adminiſtratione "voluntatis ſuæ arbitrium liberum unuſquiſque præpoſi- "tus, rationem actus ſui Domino redditurus." Epiſt. 72. p. 129. ad finem.

Hence Jortin ſays of St. Cyprian, "if his authority be "any thing, the Pope's authority is nothing: he hath "cut it up from the root by eſtabliſhing the parity of Biſhops." 2d Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 394.

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had been received at Rome againſt him; and declaring that all Biſhops were equal in power.

But remonſtrances, and repeated decrees of early [s] councils, were not ſufficient to counteract a power which was ſure of being ſupported by the paſſions and intereſts of mankind.

Even Athanaſius, when obliged to leave Alexandria, [t] retired to Rome and contributed to aggrandize the Biſhop of that ſee by appealing to him. Indeed it may be remarked of both the [u] Eaſtern and the [w] African Clergy, that, whenever they were unable to ſupport either themſelves or their doctrines, they were always forward to appeal to the Roman Pontiff. Beſides, after the civil eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity the Biſhops of Rome had not only the [x] Imperial ſanction for their titular preemi-

[s] Of the ſecond general council and that at Milevum—See Burnet's Hiſt. vol. i. p. 138—9. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 27 and 128. Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. i. p. 560. And Bingham's Antiquities, b. ix. c. i. ſect. 13.

[t] Sozomen ſays in his Eccl. Hiſt. "αφικομενον δε ως αυτους "Αθανασιον φιλοφρονως εδεξαντο και τορος αυτους την κατ' αυτον "εἰλκον δικην." l. iii. c. 7. See alſo Socrates, Hiſt. Eccl. l. ii. c. 11.

[u] Socrates, Hiſt. Eccl. l. iv. c. 12.

[w] See a claim addreſſed in the 5th century to the African Clergy by a Biſhop of Rome, in which he aſſerts his Right thus to receive appeals and to decide on all occaſions. Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. i. p. 394.

[x] Moſheim, vol. i. p. 351.

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nence, and a full ſhare of the legal [y] power which the Church now derived from the ſtate; they had alſo the moſt favourable opportunity of increaſing this power by the removal of the reſidence of the Emperours to the Eaſtern parts of their Dominions.

The Papal incroachments found likewiſe from time to time protection in the diſordered ſtate of the Weſtern world ariſing from the inundation of Barbarians; and precedent in the example of unlimited power conferred by the Celtic Barbarians on their [z] Arch-Druid. They had moreover not only eccleſiaſtical pretenſions for their ſupport: theſe, through the favours which they conferred by abſolving the conſciences of guilty Princes aud by aſſiſting them with anathemas againſt their enemies, procured beſides in the eighth century for the Biſhoprick of Rome large [a] donations of land,

[y] One of the branches of this legal power, which contributed exceedingly in future ages to the temporal preeminence of the Clergy, was the right which Conſtantine gave perſons, contending in law, to remove their cauſes out of the civil courts and to appeal to the judgment of the Biſhops; whoſe ſentence in this caſe was to have the ſame authority as if it had been decreed by the Emperour himſelf. Sozomen, Hiſt. Eccl. l. i. c. 9. See ſome account of the ſubſequent effects of this conceſſion in Father Paul's Hiſt. of the Council of Trent, tranſlated by Brent, p. 312, 313.

[z] Jortin's Rem. vol. iv. p. 441.

[a] From Pepin.

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and raiſed it to the ſubſtantial power of a temporal Sovereignity.

During the progreſs of theſe circumſtances, who can wonder that the Roman Pontiffs ſhould aſſert their ſuperiority to the civil power by withholding from the Emperour the uſual tribute at their [b] election, and afterwards by [c] diſclaiming all dependance upon his authority: or that theſe Pontiffs, having laid the foundation for a ſeparation between the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches by [d] excommunicating the Biſhop of Conſtantinople, ſhould both actually [e] pronounce this ſeparation when the Eaſtern Chriſtians refuſed to join with them in the worſhip of images, and finally conſummate the unhappy breach by new and unrecalled anathemas, as ſoon as their uſurped dominion was endangered by the interference of the Greek Patriarch in [f] parts of the Latin communion?

[b] This was done by Agatho in the 7th century.

[c] This happened in the eighth century under the Popedom of Gregory the Second and Third. Moſh. vol. ii. p. 262—3.

[d] Felix Biſhop of Rome excommunicated Acacius Biſhop of Conſtantinople about the end of the fifth century.

[e] See Moſh. vol. ii. p. 262—3.

[f] In Illyricum, Macedonia, Epirus, Achaia, Theſſaly, and Sicily: and about the year 862. Moſh. vol ii. p. 352. Cave calls it the controverſia Bulgariana, and ſays of it—"Quantas turbas excitaverit controverſia hæc Bulgariana hiſtoriæ hujus ſæculi (ſcil. noni) non prorſus igna-

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In the mean time alſo the watchful policy of the Romiſh Church failed not to graſp at all the different means, both internal and external, which offered themſelves to ſecure the power that ſhe claimed and to impoſe its deciſions upon the Chriſtian world. As if the general influence over the Weſtern Church, which the Biſhops of it had imperceptibly given to the See of Rome, was not a ſufficient ſupport for the Papal Dominion; no ſooner had the ſucceſſors of thoſe [g] pious Monks, who in times of perſecution had fled from the habitations of ſociety, or who in future times had withdrawn through erroneous notions of Chriſtianity to a life of mortification, made themſelves conſiderable by their numbers, their poſſeſſions, and the acquiſition of all the learning of their times; than the Church of Rome immediately [h] detached them from the juriſ-

" ris ſatis conſtat. Hinc rupta deinceps penitus concordia, " natumque ſchiſma nullo forte ſæculo extinguendum." Hiſt. Liter. vol. ii. p. 2.

[g] See what is ſaid concerning the Monks of Egypt by Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccl. l. ii. c. 17.

See alſo Bingham's Antiquities, b. viii. c. 1. ſect. 4.

[h] This happened in the ſeventh century, as Moſheim ſays, vol. ii. p. 172. See concerning it Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 388. And, concerning the original ſubjection of Monks to the Biſhops of their own dioceſe, ſee Bingham's Antiquities, b. ii. c. 4. ſect. 2. and b. vii. c. 3. ſect. 17.

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diction of their reſpective Prelates, and formed them into independent communities which were every where to obey the orders and enforce the authority of the ſupreme Pontiff.

But this was a leſs injurious device for the eſtabliſhment of Papal power than preſents itſelf to us in the fatal [i] reſtraints impoſed with regard to the uſe of the Scriptures in the common language; and in the diſpenſations and indulgences; no leſs than the [k] excommunications, penances, holy wars, and [l] perſecutions, which, proceeding in the end to the moſt horrid extravagance, diffuſed laſting impiety, immorality, and cruelty through all the

[i] See note *, page 89.

[k] It was a prevailing opinion that he who was excommunicated forfeited all the rights not only of a citizen, but alſo of a human creature. Jortin's 3d Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 417.

[l] Burnet ſays, "The firſt inſtance of ſeverity on men's "bodies, which was not cenſured by the Church, was in "the fifth" (rather the ſixth) "century under Juſtin the "Firſt, who ordered the tongue of Severus (who had been "Patriarch of Antioch, but did daily anathematiſe the "Council of Chalcedon) to be cut out: And that it was not before the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that ſuch cruelties were raiſed to their utmoſt extravagance by being inflicted on numbers of ſimple and innocent perſons. Hiſt. of the Ref. vol. i. p. 24.

As late as in the ſixteenth century the Pope wiſhed to introduce the inquiſition into every country of Chriſtendom, Burnet's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 347.

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different orders of ſociety. But indeed what leſs was to be expected from the continued and almoſt uninterrupted advances, which the Papal power had for many ages been making; and from the profligacy of the Biſhops by whom it was finally eſtabliſhed?

The Prelates, who filled the Apoſtolical chair about the ninth and tenth centuries, have furniſhed the enemies of Chriſtianity, no leſs than the enemies of the abuſes of it, with inexhauſtable matter of invective. They ſeem to have been permitted by Providence to prove the extreme folly, as well as blaſphemy, of thoſe pretenſions to infallibility which have been made for the Biſhops of that See. "There "was a [m] ſucceſſion," ſays Stillingfleet, "of "not leſs than fifty Biſhops ſo remarkable for "their wickedneſs that Annas and Caiaphas "(ſetting only aſide their condemning Chriſt) "were ſaints in compariſon of them."

It muſt be confeſſed however, that among the Biſhops of Rome after the commencement of the eleventh century there were many, who were diſtinguiſhed by their zeal for the recovery of the diſcipline of the Church and the

[m] Sermon 1ſt, vol. ii. 8vo. p. 49. Edit. 1697.

Jortin ſays of this period, "The Prelates and Clergy "were in general as ignorant and profligate as can be "well conceived: and the Popes were not men but "devils." Rem. vol. v. P. 13.

honour

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honour of the holy See. But such was the ultimate tendency of their zeal, that we may almost join with those [n] writers, who pronounce their virtues to have been more detrimental to mankind than the vices of their predecessors. They appear to have taken it for granted, that whatsoever authority had been either exercised or claimed by their predecessors belonged of right to their Church. And effectual means had been left them to persuade superstitious and illiterate ages of the justice of their pretensions by the [o] forgeries, which had been contrived to sanction all their temporal and spiritual claims and which were actually received for many ages as genuine productions.

And though Gregory the Seventh may be considered as having carried the Papal power to its height, and as having substantiated in the ele-

[n] Jortin: 3d Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 421. Mr. Gibbon, &c.

[o] The forgeries of the donation of Constantine and the decretals of Isidorus.

Cardinal Cusanus himself says of the former, "reperi in "ipsa scriptura manifesta argumenta confictionis et falsitatis." Jewell's Works, p. 369.

The latter were supposed to contain the decrees of sixty Bishops from Clement to Siricius. Blondel has most fully proved the forgery of them and it is confessed by Steph. Baluzias—Cave's Hist. Lit. vol. ii. p. 21. It is even confessed by Baronius, Annal. ad an. 865.

These forgeries however were not fully detected before the Reformation.

venth

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venth century the Papal [p] right of interfering and deciding univerſally in both civil and religious concerns; yet Papal inſolence ſeems to have extended itſelf under its ſucceſſors in the [q] following centuries, and was not carried to its extreme height till the Pope was explicitly declared to be ſuperior to general councils, and his infallibility was [r] publicly propoſed and acknowledged in the ſixteenth century.

[p] Moſheim gives ſome account of the Dictatus Hildebrandini, or what may be ſuppoſed to have been Gregory's principles of Papal Government, vol. ii. p. 491.

[q] Particularly in the thirteenth century under Innocent the Third, &c.

[r] See the arguments advanced on this ſubject by Laynes, General of the Jeſuits, and ſupported by the other advocates for the Papal pretenſions: Father Paul's Hiſt. of the Council of Trent, p. 570—5. See alſo Bp. Jewell's Epiſt. de Concil. Trident. §. 25.

It may be thought ſtrange that this offenſive claim ſhould be made at a time when the Papacy was ſo rudely attacked by the Reformers: but the Church of Rome acted about this time in the ſame imprudent manner with regard alſo to its other claims. "In the year 1534, Pope "Clement the Seventh was not aſhamed to grant to his "nephew Hippolitus Cardinal de Medicis all the bene- "fices of the world, ſecular and regular, dignities and "perſonages, ſimple and with cure, being vacant, for ſix "months to begin from the firſt day of his poſſeſſion, with "power to diſpoſe of and convert to his uſe all the fruits" —Father Paul's Hiſt. p. 235. And in 1556 the Pope declared "he would change Kingdoms at his pleaſure, that "he had made Ireland a Kingdom, that all Princes were "under his feet, and that he would allow no Prince to be "his

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It would be eaſy to add more obſervations on the conduct of particular Biſhops of Rome, by which the Papal power was eſtabliſhed: but the truth with regard to thoſe Biſhops is, that all of them laboured to extend their juriſdiction and uniformly carried on the ſame ſcheme. One [s]incroachment followed another; till at length, aided by the circumſtances above mentioned and various others, they were enabled to oppreſs all Weſtern Chriſtendom, and to cruſh for many ages every attempt to revive a ſpirit of moderation in the rulers of the Church, and the true knowledge and practice of Chriſtianity among its different members. The corruption and ignorance, which enſued, were in the end ſuch, that, as we are [t] told, "the world was poſſeſſed with a "conceit that there was a trick for ſaving

"his companion nor to be too familiar with him." Burnet's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 342—3. Indeed Bp. Jewell ſtates, that the proportion, aſſerted about this time to ſubſiſt between the Emperour's and the Pope's power, was as one to ſeventy-ſeven. Jewell's Apology for the Church of England, p. 73, and elſewhere.

And, to complete the whole, Cardinal Bellarmine aſſerts that the only reaſon why the early Chriſtians did not depoſe Nero, Diocleſian, and Julian, was becauſe they wanted means to effect it. This is mentioned and well refuted by Cave in his "Primitive Chriſtianity," vol. ii. p. 349—351.

[s] See Jortin's Rem. vol. v. p. 349.

[t] Burnet's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 74.

"ſouls

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" ſouls beſides that plain method, which Chriſt " had taught; and that the Prieſts had the ſe- " cret of it in their hands."

Whatever friendly agreement there might be between the Biſhops of Rome and other Biſhops in the commencement of their power; no agreement could at length be maintained with the Romiſh Church, except by ſubmiſſion. And various reaſons contributed to hinder this in the Clergy of the Eaſt. The want of juſt foundation in the Papal power could not be unknown to the Patriarchs of Conſtantinople: and theſe Patriarchs were not the leſs ſtrenuous to [u]retort the anathemas, by which they were ſeparated from the Romiſh communion, and to defend their own power, becauſe, as is [x]remarked of them, they were ſingularly tolerant in the exerciſe of it. The vicinity of the Imperial court alſo, which hindered the Biſhops of Conſtantinople from acquiring civil power, contributed in no ſmall degree to protect them againſt the arbitrary incroachments of other Churches. Beſides, the [y]ſplendour itſelf of this court created in all, who lived within its influence and protec-

[u] This was done by Acacius, Photius, and Michael Cerularius. Moſh. vol. ii. p. 84, 351, 555.

[x] Socrates, Hiſt. Eccl. l. vii. c. 11.

[y] The account which may be collected from Chryſoſtom's works of this ſplendour almoſt exceeds belief.

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tion, ſuch a pride, as was little inferior to that of the Romiſh Church and would ſubmit to the dictates of no foreign Eccleſiaſtic.

There was moreover a fixed contempt, with which the Greeks affected to treat their leſs learned brethren of the Weſt, which irreſiſtibly prevented their ſubmiſſion in matters of religious controverſy. The Greek Clergy, though involved in nearly a common [z] ignorance of true Chriſtianity with the whole Chriſtian world, were certainly more learned in other reſpects and more grave than thoſe of the Latin communion. Some few indeed of the dignified Clergy among the Latins were in no reſpect inferior to the moſt celebrated of the Greeks; but theſe Latins ſurpaſſed the other members of the Weſtern Church [a] beyond all compariſon.

The prejudices, ariſing in the minds of the

[z] The Greeks and Latins ſeem at length to have agreed in the darker ages that the eſſence and life of Religion conſiſted in image-worſhip, in honouring dead ſaints, in collecting relics, in enriching the Church, and other ſuch exertions of piety. Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 417.

And Jortin calls the Biſhops at the ſecond council of Nice, who reeſtabliſhed image-worſhip in the Eaſt in the 8th century, "the moſt lying and ſenſeleſs blockheads "upon the face of the earth." Rem. vol. iv. p. 466.

[a] This was remarkably true in England in the 13th and 14th centuries. See the ſecond diſſertation prefixed to Warton's Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry.

Greeks

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Greeks from all these circumstances, made them amidst their distress repeatedly resist the solicitations of [b] those among their Emperours, who wished to purchase the assistance of the Franks by the dependence of their Church: and, joined to other prejudices excited by the oppressive [c] reign of the Latins in Constantinople and by mutual persecution, made them to the very last, even in the extremity of their siege, disdain to hear of succour which was to be obtained by submission to the Roman Pontiff.

The influence, which this situation of the two Communions must have had on their doctrines, is very obvious. I have before remarked that one pernicious consequence of disputes between the Rulers of the Church was the want of purity, which thenceforth prevailed throughout the Christian world. The pretensions of the Latin and Greek Churches, and the particular [d] doctrines in

[b] This happened both to Michael and John Palæologus.

[c] For the sixty years, during which the Crusaders kept possession of Constantinople.

[d] The fatal consequences of this state of the Christian Church shewed themselves soon after the days of Constantine. The doctrines of Arianism, which prevailed at Constantinople under Constantius and some of his successors, were so powerfully impressed on Ulphilas, when he

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which they oppoſed each other, whether important or not, were the ſubjects more earneſtly inculcated among themſelves and enforced on their converts and dependants, than the great and fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity.

When therefore the northern [d] nations of

he came thither on an embaſſy from the Goths, and were ſo ſucceſsfully propagated by him among his countrymen; that the Arian hereſy maintained itſelf much longer among them, and, through their means, among other Northern nations, than in any other communities. Theodoret in his Eccl. Hiſt. ſays of Ulphilas's converſion to Arianiſm, "Κατ' εκεινον δε τον χρονον Ουλφιλας αυτων (Γοτ-
"θων ſcilicet) επισκοπος ην, ω μαλα επειθοντο, και τους εκεινου
"λογους ακινητους υπελαμβανον νυμους· τουτον και λογοις κατα-
"κληγας Ευδοξιος και χρημασι δελεασας πεισαι ταρεσκευασε
"τους Βαρβαρους την βασιλεως κοινωνιαν ασπασασθαι· επεισε δε,
"φησας εκ φιλοτιμιας γεγενησθαι την εριν, δογματων δε μηδεμιαν
"ειναι διαφορᾶν." L. iv. c. 37. Reading. See alſo Sozomen, Hiſt. Eccl. l. vi. c. 37.

Sozomen afterwards clearly aſſerts that Ulphilas was the great cauſe of the prevalence and continuance of Arianiſm among the nations of the North, Hiſt. Eccl. l. vii. c. 17. Where ſpeaking of the diviſions of the Arians he calls one of them that of the Goths, adding "Γοτθων
"δε, καθοτι και Σελινας, ὁ τουτων επισκοπος, ομοιως εδοξαζεν.
"επακολουθησαντες δε τουτῳ χεδον παντες βαρβαροι συν αυτοις
"εκκλησιαζον· πειθηνιοι γαρ εις τα μαλιστα τῳ Σελινῳ ετυγ-
"χανον ὑπογραφει τε γενομενῳ και διαδοχῳ Ουλφιλα, του παρ'
"αυτοις επισκοπησαντος," κ. τ. λ.

[d] Bulgaria, Hungary, Bohemia, Saxony, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, and Ruſſia.

Moſheim charges Boniface the Apoſtle of the Germans with an exceſſive zeal for increaſing the honours and pre-

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Europe were converted by theſe Churches, they may be ſaid not ſo much to have been converted to Chriſtianity in general, as to the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing tenets of the Romiſh or Greek Communion: and this too, at the moſt degenerate period of both thoſe Communions. No wonder then, that the ſword was the inſtrument, by which Chriſtianity was propagated among many of theſe nations; and that this ſhould finiſh in [c] Lithunia the converſion of Northern Europe in the fourteenth century.

However, though the conteſts between the Weſtern and Eaſtern Chriſtians were productive of many evils; they produced alſo ſome conſiderable good. They hindered all parties from corrupting the Scriptures through fear of detection. They kept alive ſome literary inquiries; and the ſpirit, with which they

tenſions of the ſacerdotal order and a profound ignorance of many things, of which the knowledge was abſolutely neceſſary in an Apoſtle; and particularly of the true nature and genius of the Chriſtian Religion, vol. ii. p. 207.

See alſo in Cave's Hiſt. Lit. a Letter from Joannes Smera Polovecius, giving an account of the corruptions of the Latin and Greek Churches; and addreſſed to the King of the Ruſſians, when he and his Kingdom were converted to the Greek Church. Vol. ii. p. 113.

[c] This may be conceded to Mr. Gibbon, without giving him the leaſt advantage over real Chriſtianity. See his Hiſtory, vol. v. p. 577.

were

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were carried on, powerfully urged the different diſputants to exert at times their utmoſt abilities. Beſides, the unſucceſsful attempts, which were made to ſuppreſs theſe contentions and to effect an union of opinion among Chriſtians, that there might be an union of operation alſo among them againſt their common enemies, were productive of excellent conſequences. The embaſſies ſent by the Greek Emperours into the Weſt, and their journeys thither at three different times, tended effectually to recall the attention of the Latins to [f] Greek literature; and, by diſperſing among them the means of cultivating it, prepared the way for that Reformation which was to ſucceed and remedy the evils of this unhappy period.

The doctrines, which declare the internal ſtate of the Church, and which were particularly defended or corrupted during the ages that fill up the long period from Conſtantine to the Reformation, conſiſt either of thoſe fundamental doctrines of our Religion, which reſpect the Trinity, the perſon and natures of

[f] The Greek language had been exiled from Italy upwards of 700 years, when Emanuel Chryſoloras (who had been ſent by John Palæologus Emperour of Conſtantinople to implore the aſſiſtance of the Weſtern Chriſtians) ſet about the reſtoration of it in that country. See Port Royal Greek Grammar, Pref. p. 9. and 12.

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our Saviour, and other important articles of the ſame kind which are received and profeſſed by ourſelves at preſent; or of thoſe corruptions of Chriſtianity which became in ſubſequent times the ſubject of our Reformation. The former ſhew the effects of the degeneracy of the Chriſtian world by the manner in which they were defended: the latter by their very nature and exiſtence. The former had the advantage of being finally eſtabliſhed in the earlier and leſs darkened part of this period. And certainly we have reaſon to bleſs God that they were then eſtabliſhed; whatever the enemies of our Faith may [s]inſinuate to the contrary, and whatever cauſe we may have to diſapprove of the manner in which it was done.

The great doctrines of our Religion were delivered in the inſpired writings with a preciſion, which was abundantly ſufficient for the inſtruction of thoſe, who were diſpoſed rather to obey the Word of God than to look out for diſputable matter in it. When ſubtlety and viſionary ſpeculation were afterwards introduced, the foundation was laid for hereſies, which embittered the minds of Chriſtians towards each other during the times of perſecution; and which, being afterwards in-

[s] See Mr. Gibbon's Hiſt. vol. iv. chap. 47.

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creaſed, made them endeavour to reſtrain ſuch diſſentions by public deciſions of the Church, as ſoon as the civil magiſtrate was ready to lend his aſſiſtance on the occaſion and to convene eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies.

We know what were the confirmed deciſions of ſuch aſſemblies before the end of the ſeventh century: we know alſo on what authority of Scripture theſe deciſions ought to have been made. As to the concomitant circumſtances with which they were actually made, if theſe ſavour much of the corruption of the times, it is no more than we might expect. If the deciſions of different councils on the hereſy of Arius, no leſs than on other ſubjects relative to the doctrines, above mentioned, of the Trinity and of our bleſſed Saviour's perſon and natures, were made in a tumultuous manner by men of ambitious views and of little perfect knowledge of Chriſtianity, and were alſo enforced by the [h] ſword; it is no more than we might expect from the general tranſactions of thoſe times, and is a proof, in addition to numberleſs others ſupplied by hiſtory, that the Almighty is often pleaſed to bring good out of evil.

[h] The Arian perſuaſion prevailed longeſt among the Goths in Italy and the Vandals in Africa, and is ſaid to have been ſuppreſſed among them both by the ſword of Beliſarius.

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All that is eſſential to our purpoſe, is to know that the doctrines in queſtion, which are profeſſed by us at preſent and which after theſe deciſions were univerſally received before the end of the eighth century, are warranted by Scripture. Whilſt we have means to convince us of this, we have reaſon to bleſs that God, who did not ſuffer his Church to fall into errors with regard to the great doctrines of our Religion, which it might afterwards have been unſpeakably more difficult to do away, than thoſe palpable corruptions which were the ſubject of our Reformation: and eſpecially might this have been the caſe amidſt the effervescence of new opinions, ſoon after the commencement of the Reformation, when Socinus and his followers were found to ſurpaſs every former ſect of heretics in preſumptuous and degrading aſſertions concerning the perſon of Chriſt and the nature of our redemption.

As to the corruptions which were the ſubject of our Reformation, many of theſe began ſoon after the civil eſtabliſhment of our Religion: but they went on increaſing afterwards in a rapid proportion; uniting themſelves as they advanced to new and ſimilar debaſements of divine truth, and forming at length that maſs of impiety, which diſgraced the Chriſtian profeſſion and totally eradicated all devotional

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tional Religion, till it was at length diſtinguiſhed from true Chriſtianity and ſeparated from it.

Among theſe the worſhip of ſaints and images and the whole conſequent train of idolatry may be ſaid to have [k]commenced with that ſubordinate worſhip of martyrs, which [l]Euſebius and other well-meaning rulers of the Church approved and promoted in the days of Conſtantine. The abſurd veneration of the Croſs began with [m]Helena, mother of Conſtantine: and that of relics with his ſucceſſor Conſtantius, who firſt diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the removal of them. Even [n]Jerome

[k] Cave ſays, "nullum pro imaginibus citari teſtem "quarto ſæculo anteriorem." Hiſt. Lit. vol. i. p. 650.

However in the fourth century ſuch idolatrous worſhip appears to have introduced itſelf: ſince Epiphanius in his epiſtle to the Biſhop of Jeruſalem ſays, that coming into a Church, "inveni ibi velum pendens in foribus ejuſdem "eccleſiæ tinctum atque depictum, et habens imaginem "quaſi Chriſti vel ſancti cujuſdam. Non enim ſatis me-"mini cujus imago fuerit. Cum ergo hoc vidiſſem in "eccleſia Chriſti contra auctoritatem ſcripturarum ho-"minis pendere imaginem, ſcidi illud," &c. Jerome's Works, tom. ii. p. 161. Baſil 1565.

[l] Jortin's Rem. vol. iii. p. 11 and 289. Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. i. p. 650.

[m] S. Severus, p. 370—374. Rufini Hiſt. Eccl. l. i. c. 7. Ed. Grynæi 1587. Socratis Hiſt. Eccl. l. i. c. 17. Reading.

[n] Jortin's Rem. vol. ii. p. 289.

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and Ambroſe gave their unqualified ſanction to injudicious [o] mortifications and to the long train of articles of will-worſhip, which enſued, by declaiming againſt marriage and by recommending monaſtic vows under the moſt [p] injurious circumſtances.

The fatal conſequences, which proceeded in the progreſs of more than a thouſand years from theſe and other ſuch unhappy commencements, may all be ſaid to have been ultimately derived from two principles, totally repugnant to the doctrines of Revelation; the one that lies are admiſſible in defence of truth; the other, that mental imperfection is to be remedied by bodily ſuffering; principles, which

[o] It may be obſerved in general, that, when external perſecutions ceaſed, Chriſtians began to vie with each other in inflicting voluntary puniſhments on themſelves.

[p] "Jerome drew a noble matron, the mother of many "children, away from Rome with him, and was the "means of ſending her about to viſit the different Monks "of the Eaſt, and to ſquander the fortune of her family "upon them."—"Ambroſe was ſo violent a declaimer in "favour of virginity, that he exhorts young girls in one "of his treatiſes to enter into Nunneries even againſt the "advice of their parents." Jortin's Rem. vol. iii. p. 37. and 40.

Jortin makes Eraſmus ſay in a ſimilar manner of the Monks themſelves, "theſe men ſay that you muſt follow "Jeſus Chriſt, though you were to trample upon the "bodies of your father and mother." Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 71.

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many of the [q]Fathers of the Church contributed to bring into credit.

[r]Hence all the fictitious miracles which gave ſanction to the worſhip of [s]Saints, their images and relics; which gave this worſhip a general and firm footing before the end of the ſixth century; made it triumph over all the oppoſition of the Eaſtern Emperours in the eighth century; and made it triumph ultimately over the moderation with which the principal [t]Kingdoms of the Weſtern Europe for ſome ages received it. Hence alſo the diverſified diſplay of monaſtic inſtitutions, the celibacy enforced on the Clergy, the doctrines of purgatory and of prayers for the dead, the fantaſtic penances, the [u]cruſades, perſecutions, diſpenſations, and indulgences; to ſay nothing of the ceremo-

[q] Ambroſe, Hilary, Auguſtine, Gregory Nazianzen, and Jerome. See Jortin's Rem. vol. iv. p. 19, 20. There are not however wanting authors of note, who contend againſt both Moſheim and Jortin, that theſe writers never report what they know to be falſe. This is urged in their vindication by Cave and others.

[r] See Jortin's 3d Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 410—415.

[s] And particularly of the Virgin Mary.

[t] France, England, Spain, and Germany.

See concerning this ſubject Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 139—142.

[u] The cruſades, or holy wars, which have been mentioned above as inſtrumental in advancing the power of the

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nies which diſgraced Chriſtianity during theſe times.

As to the corruptions relative to the Sacrament, theſe had a late origin. Communion without a [x]participation of the cup, [y]tranſubſtantiation, and all the circumſtances relative to the [z]adoration of the Hoſt, (of which many were the effects of trivial and accidental ſug-

the Biſhops of Rome, muſt be conſidered as the reſult of an injurious and moſt unprofitable corruption of the true principles of Chriſtianity. They did not tend to diffuſe even its nominal profeſſion. The gentle and humble means, uſed by the Almighty in the original propagation of our Religion, effected in the Eaſt a converſion to its belief, which the effuſion of all Europe in arms was not in the leaſt degree able again to produce.

[x] Pope Paſcal in the 12th century ordered the Sacrament to be adminiſtered under one kind only. But the Laity in England had it in both kinds for 200 years after the Conqueſt. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. Pref. p. 11. and vol. i. p. 489. Indeed, in Father Paul's Hiſtory of the Council of Trent, it is ſaid that the communion of the chalice was obſerved by the whole Church till within 200 years of that time (1546) P. 154.

[y] Though tranſubſtantiation was broached by Radbertus in the year 818. (Jortin's Rem. vol. iv. p. 84.) yet it was not eſtabliſhed before the time of Innocent the Third who lived in the 13th century. Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 243. and Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. p. 276.

[z] "The hanging up and adoring of the Hoſt was but "lately ſet up, ſays Cranmer, by Pope Innocent and Ho- "norius." Burnet's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 116.

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geſtions from the ignorant [a] populace) can pretend to no early eſtabliſhment. The [b] refuſal of the Scriptures to the people in the common

[a] This was the caſe with both the Proceſſion and the Feſtival of the Holy Sacrament. Jortin's Rem. vol. v. p. 472. And Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 261.

[b] See an account of this in a preceding note, [x], p. 89. I may add that the Romaniſts not only attempted to bring the Scriptures into diſuſe, but alſo into diſcredit. Wickliff's followers urged againſt the preaching Friars that they laid blaſphemous imputations on the Scriptures, and charged them with hereſy. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 579.

Moſheim ſays, "the Popes permitted their champions "to indulge themſelves openly in reflections, injurious to "the dignity of the Scriptures, and by an exceſs of blaſ- "phemy almoſt incredible to declare publicly that the "edicts of the Pontiffs and the records of oral tradition "were ſuperior in point of authority to the expreſs lan- "guage of Scripture." Vol. iv. p. 213. To the ſame effect Biſhop Jewell ſays, "Indulgentiæ (inquit Pierias) "auctoritate Scripturæ non innotuerunt nobis, ſed aucto- "ritate Romanæ Eccleſiæ Romanorumque Pontificum, "quæ major eſt. Pighius etiam non dubitet dicere in- "juſſu Romanæ Eccleſiæ ne clariſſimæ quidem ſcripturæ "credendum." Apol. pro Eccl. Anglic. p. 121. And ſuch at length was the conſequence of the early corruptions introduced into Chriſtianity by philoſophy and of the attempts afterwards made to conceal and vilify the Scriptures; that after the Lutheran controverſy had been long carried on, many of the Monks in Scotland were ſo ignorant of their contents, as to charge Luther with being the author of that wicked book, called the New Teſtament. Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 126. See alſo on this ſubject Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. Append. p. 158.

language

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language, which, with many of the corruptions juſt ſtated, has been mentioned, as immediately reſulting from the crafty policy of the rulers of the Church, was followed by a ſubſtitution of oral tradition in their ſtead, and at length by prohibitions in the common language of all the different parts of religious [c] worſhip and [d] inſtruction.

Such prohibitions however muſt be conſidered not only as a conſequence, but alſo in ſubſequent ages as an additional and aggravating cauſe, of the perverſion of our Religion. But in whatever manner they are conſidered, they ſerve conſpicuouſly to withdraw pure Chriſtianity from the diſgraceful ſcenes of this unhappy period, and leave the profligacy of the profeſſors of our Religion to be imputed moſt excluſively to themſelves.

[c] The Latin form of worſhip, which had for many ages before been ſtrongly recommended by the Popes, was at length enforced in all the Weſtern Churches by Gregory the Seventh. Moſh. vol. ii. p. 573.

[d] Our Homily againſt Rebellion (part the 6th) ſays, "very few of the moſt ſimple people were taught the "Lord's prayer, the articles of faith, or the ten com-"mandments, otherwiſe than in Latin." But Burnet goes much farther, and ſays of the beginning of the reign of Hen. VIII. "If any taught their children the Lord's "prayer, the ten commandments and the Apoſtles' creed "in the vulgar tongue; that was crime enough to bring "them to the ſtake." Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 31.

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All theſe erroneous doctrines and uſages appear to have been maintained, with very few [e]exceptions, by both the Romaniſts and Greeks. The inſignificancy of the [f]charges, which Michael Cerularius urged againſt the Latins in the eleventh century, while it proves the ſiniſter zeal of the diſputant who urged them, forces us to conclude that the great corruptions of Chriſtianity at that period were common to the whole Chriſtian world. Even when the difference between the Weſtern and Eaſtern Churches was afterwards reduced to [g]four articles, that only, which related to the

[e] Among theſe one of the principal exceptions is, that the Greeks did not refuſe the cup to the Laity.

[f] That they uſed unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper: that they did not abſtain from things ſtrangled and from blood: that the Monks ate lard, and permitted their infirm brethren to eat fleſh: that the Biſhops adorned their fingers with rings, as if they had been bridegrooms: that the Prieſts were beardleſs: and that in baptiſm they uſed only one immerſion. Moſh. vol. ii. p. 556—7.

[g] The four articles reſpected the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, the uſe of leavened or unleavened bread in the ſacrifice, the doctrine of purgatory, and the authority of the Pope. The diſputants for the two Churches appear not to have differed eſſentially in their tenets concerning purgatory; though they could come to no deciſive concluſion concerning it. See Du Pin's Hiſt. of the controverſies of the 15th century, p. 37. Engl. Ed. But though formerly the great corruptions of the Romiſh Church were in general chargeable on the Greeks, and the difference between the Creeds of the two Communions was not important;

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Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, was a doctrine of Faith on which they appear to have really and eſſentially differed.

With regard to the external ſtate of the Church during this period, it has been [h] remarked that Chriſtianity was ſo much altered and defaced after its civil eſtabliſhment as to ſtand in need of the protection of the civil power; and had it not enjoyed this protection, Paganiſm itſelf (if refined and new-modelled) might have had too many advantages over it. The remark is entirely juſt. And this unhappy alteration in our religion might well render the evils, to which it was expoſed from foreign enemies, a ſubject of terror to all thoſe among its profeſſors, whoſe apprehenſions were not relieved by a conſideration of its divine origin and of the aſſurances which have been given us of its ſtability and perpetual duration.

The invaſions of the Goths, and of various other nations from the North, who, purſuing the ſame route after the Goths, overwhelmed in ſucceſſive ages all the civilized kingdoms of Southern Europe, were ſo deſtructive during

portant; yet the confeſſion of Faith, which was publiſhed by the Greeks in the laſt century, proves that they differ conſiderably at preſent from the Romaniſts in many reſpects. It appears however that their tenets in theſe reſpects are unfortunately different alſo from thoſe of other Chriſtian ſocieties. Moſh. vol. iv. p. 250.

[h] Jortin's Rem. vol. ii. p. 337.

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thoſe times, and have ſince produced ſuch laſting effects; that they form the principal part of our hiſtory during the four centuries which immediately followed the reign of Conſtantine. But the danger, which they ſeemed to threaten to the eſtabliſhed profeſſion of Chriſtianity, was of very ſhort continuance. The Northern invaders conquered indeed at different times all the different parts of the Roman Empire, except that which immediately [i] ſurrounded Conſtantinople; and often obtained forcible poſſeſſion of Rome. But, in juſtice to their moderation, it has been inſiſted that they did very little injury to the monuments of art or to the [k] religious edifices, which adorned the old capital of the world. And the danger, which their invaſions might at firſt threaten to the profeſſion of our Religion was fully done away by the readineſs and permanency with which they themſelves became its converts.

The greateſt evils, which Chriſtianity had to expect from foreign enemies, were to be feared from thoſe, who every where declared

[i] Socratis Hiſt. Eccl. l. v. c. 1. et l. vi. c. 6. Sozom. Hiſt. Eccl. l. vi. c. 39.

[k] Sozomen ſays that Alaric, when he took Rome, had ſuch reverence for St. Peter that he permitted his Church to be an Aſylum. Hiſt. Eccl. l. ix. c. 9.

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themſelves not leſs hoſtile to its diſcriminating doctrines than to the perſons of its profeſſors.

About the beginning of the ſeventh century thoſe [1]Churches of Aſia, which had been the diſtinguiſhed care of the Apoſtles and peculiar objects of divine Revelation, were ſunk into a groſs degeneracy both of faith and practice. About the ſame time alſo the Perſians, Romans, and Northern Barbarians ſeem to have reached their period of greateſt profligacy and diſorder. At this ſeaſonable juncture Mahomet, the artful and warlike impoſtor of Arabia, aroſe to delude and perſecute mankind. Aware of his own fraud, and of the neceſſity of conciliating the minds of men, he accommodated his doctrines to the [m]prepoſſeſſions of all around him in a manner totally different from what has ever been obſerved in the Revelations of the God of truth.

He not only endeavoured, by the aſſiſtance of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Scriptures, to form a Religion which might be received by both Jews and Chriſtians as conſiſtent in ſome degree with their own, and which might flatter the prejudices of his countrymen who boaſted

[1] Evagrius deſcribes the Churches of the Eaſt, as being in a miſerable ſtate of confuſion even in the fifth century. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iii. c. 30. Reading.

[m] Jortin has remarked, that without this he never could have made five converts. Rem. vol. ii. p. 278.

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of their deſcent from Abraham; but farther alſo he dared to plead Divine authority for indulging the impurity of his followers in this life, and for promiſing them a continuance of their impure gratifications in the regions of eternal happineſs. The circumſtances of the times and the juſt indignation of the Almighty gave ſucceſs to the impoſtor; while at the ſame time ſuch marks of impoſition were left on himſelf and his Religion, as might for ever make known the real characters of [n] both.

[n] It is not from Prideaux and other writers of former times only, that we are to ſeek for ſevere condemnations of both Mahomet aad the Koran. Volney, who is among the lateſt travellers into the Eaſt, ſays, "it certainly may "be aſſerted ſafely that of all the men, who have ever "dared to give laws to nations, Mahomet was the moſt "ignorant; of all the abſurd compoſitions ever produced, "none is more truly wretched than his book." Vol. ii. p. 397. Engl. Edit.

And Mr. Whitaker aſſerts in his "Origin of Arianiſm "diſcloſed" that Mahomet "betrayed his ignorance in a "form ſo very palpable and groſs upon his very Koran, "as ſeems to be intended for the mint-mark of God "himſelf in order to ſhew the falſity of his inſpiration to "every eye," p. 336. In ſupport of his aſſertion he then gives many particular inſtances of this ignorance and expoſes the weakneſs of the attempts, made by Sale and the Mahometans, to palliate its abſurdities, as they who require ſuch proofs of the falſehood of the Mahometan Religion may ſee p. 336—360. Afterwards in the ſame chapter he ſtigmatizes the groſs obſcenity both of the Mahometan Prophet and Religion, and of Mr. Gibbon who is their advocate; expoſes the perjury ſanctioned by

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That men ſhould be permitted to forſake the truth, and, at their own peril, to believe a lie, is indeed no more than we may expect in a ſtate of probation. The divine diſpenſations on ſuch occaſions are uniformly conſiſtent. The Prophet of Judah was perſuaded by a pretended Revelation to diſobey what he knew to be an expreſs command of God, and was ſlain as a puniſhment for his impious credulity; whilſt the Prophet of Bethel, who had lied unto him, is no where immediately held forth to us in Scripture as an example of divine vengeance.

Though [o] three out of Mahomet's four immediate ſucceſſors fell by the hands of aſſaſſins; yet ſuch ſucceſs attended the zeal with which the profeſſors of his Religion fought,

the example of Mahomet; and ſatisfactorily ſhews, that, though he was aſſiſted in the compoſition of his Koran by an excommunicated Chriſtian, his principal aſſiſtance came from a Jew, Abdia Ben Salon.

As a conſequence of the ſanction, juſtly ſaid by Mr. Whitaker to be given by Mahomet to perjury, I ſhall produce the following fact on the authority of Mr. Gibbon himſelf: "Four thouſand citizens of Herat of a grave "character and mature age unanimouſly ſwore that an "idolatrous fane," which they had juſt burnt, "never "exiſted." By this meritorious oath (as it was thought) they and their city eſcaped all puniſhment for the outrage. Gibbon's Hiſt. vol. v. p. 384.

[o] Omar, Othman, and Ali. Abubeker the firſt of his ſucceſſors reigned only two years.

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that all the provinces both of Aſia and Africa, which bordered on Arabia, ſoon became ſubject to them. And ſo widely did their victories extend, that they ſubdued alſo a conſiderable part of Europe, and made ſuch advances towards the conqueſt of the remaining parts, that the entire conqueſt of them is ſaid to have been hindered by a defeat, which Mr. Gibbon aſcribes ſo excluſively to the valour of an [p] individual, as to declare that the Clergy are indebted for their exiſtence to his ſword.

That ſuch indeed was the ſtate of our Religion both with regard to its profeſſors and its doctrines, that neither the Eaſtern nor Weſtern Chriſtians oppoſed to the inroads of Mahometan enthuſiaſm the infinite advantages which the ſuperior purity of their Religion ought to have afforded them, may readily be confeſſed. But, notwithſtanding the unworthineſs of Chriſtians, we cannot ſo readily confeſs that the Almighty ought to be excluded from ſome particular ſhare in the [q] defeat here referred to. We need go no farther than to this hiſtorian's own words to prove the contrary. After the ſeventh day's conteſt, which (as the Saracens had ſtill the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of their camp) appears by no means to have been irre-

[p] Charles Martel. See Mr. Gibbon, vol. v. p. 412.
[q] Gibbon's Hiſt. vol. v. p. 411.

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coverably deciſive, he ſays—" In the diſorder " and deſpair of the night the various tribes of " Yemen and Damaſcus, of Africa and Spain, " were provoked to turn their arms againſt " each other: the remains of their Hoſt were " ſuddenly diſſolved, and each Emir conſulted " his ſafety by an haſty and ſeparate retreat." Surely this reſembles [r]defeats, which Chriſtians want no human authority to refer ſolely to God.

But this is not the only occurrence of the ſort with regard to ſuch enemies of our Faith, which is worthy of our notice and which is recorded by the ſame hiſtorian. The manner, in which Rome was [s]preſerved from a formidable attack of the Saracens by the diſperſion and total deſtruction of their fleet; the preſervation of Conſtantinople from alarming and repeated attacks of the ſame enemies in their early hiſtory by the apparently accidental diſcovery of a moſt deſtructive [t]fire; the preſervation of it alſo from the meditated attack of

[r] See the 7th Chapter of Judges, the 14th Chapter of 1 Samuel, and the 7th Chapter of the ſecond book of Kings.

[s] Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 441.

[t] Gibbon, vol. v. p. 399—405. This fire was diſcovered by Callinicus an Egyptian in the 7th century, and called by the Greeks " ὑγρον πυρ." Bp. Warburton's Julian, p. 234. See alſo Jortin's Rem. vol. iv. p. 430.

Zengis

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[u] Zengis Khan; the [x] diſorder, by which Bajazet's fury againſt the Chriſtians was ſuſpended; his [y] defeat and deſtruction by Timour; and the fortunate eſcape of Conſtantinople from the victorious [z] Timour himſelf; all theſe remarkable circumſtances are admitted by our hiſtorian and well known.

It is preſumptuous and often fallacious to reaſon from events in human hiſtory to the eſtabliſhment of particular and immediate interpoſitions of Providence. But the moſt moderate eſtimate of theſe circumſtances, as connected with our Religion, ought at leaſt to exclude all boaſtings of infidelity, and all ſarcaſtic reflections concerning the means by which we now have an opportunity in this [a] our ſeat of learning to demonſtrate the truth of the Chriſtian, rather than that of the Mahometan Religion.

[u] Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 308.

[x] Ibid. p. 323. Mr. Gibbon's words in this paſſage are well worthy of our notice: "His progreſs," ſays Mr. G. "was checked, not by the miraculous interpoſition of the "Apoſtle (St. Peter,) not by a cruſade of the Chriſtian "powers, but by a long and painful fit of the gout." Doubtleſs, the hiſtorian might have ſpared his reflections on the occaſion; as Bajazet's diſorder, at this critical juncture, might, notwithſtanding all that he inſinuates to the contrary, have ſtill been eminently providential.

[y] Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 330.

[z] Ibid. vol. vi. p. 357.

[a] Gibbon, vol. v. p. 409.

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Through theſe [z] deliverances Weſtern Europe and Conſtantinople were reſcued from the power of the Mahometans and of all the external enemies of Chriſtianity, till the Chriſtians of Weſtern Europe had eſtabliſhed their powerful Kingdoms; Kingdoms, which conſpicuouſly partake of the iron aſcribed to them

[z] Such obſervations however muſt be conſidered as oppoſed to the ſneers of our adverſaries, rather than as employed in the elucidation of events on which the exiſtence of our Religion can be thought to have ever depended. For it is falſe in fact that a Religion, ſo founded as Chriſtianity, muſt be extirpated or eſſentially endangered, if it ſhould ceaſe to be eſtabliſhed by civil authority. Chriſtianity has no neceſſary dependance upon earthly power. We know that it flouriſhed under the perſecution of the Roman Emperours and in the end converted its perſecutors. We know that it afterwards converted the ſavage conquerors from the North. And we know from authority, which we cannot doubt, that it muſt at length convert its Mahometan oppreſſors. In the mean time alſo we are aſſured that all the cruelty and all the perfidy of the Mahometans have not been able to extirpate it in any of their dominions either of Europe or Aſia. Indeed the authority of Mr. Gibbon himſelf may be brought to prove, that the Northern coaſt of Africa is the only land where the light of the Goſpel has been totally extinguiſhed after a long and perfect eſtabliſhment: (Vol. v. p. 386.). And even this extinction of it, if referred to its proper cauſe, muſt be aſcribed to devaſtations of the plague, of famine, and the ſword, which laid waſte this country not long before its conqueſt by the Saracens (Gibbon's Hiſt. vol. iv. p. 276. 331. &c.); and not to the Religion or the power of unbelievers.

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in Daniel's[a] prophecies: till learning had begun to [b]revive in these Kingdoms, and its permanency had been insured by the art of printing: till a Reformation of Christianity was about to commence: and till, from the united influence of all these causes, such barriers were formed for the support of our Religion, as have since raised it far above all apprehension from external enemies.

Such are the outlines of the Christian history from the time of Constantine to the Reformation; as far as relates to the degeneracy of the rulers of the Church, to the confusion of sacred and profane learning, to the invasions of savage conquerors, and to the effects produced, under these general and leading principles, on the Romish and Greek Communions, on the doctrines of the Church, and on its situation with regard to external enemies. And so little reason is there for the sarcasms, which are levelled against our Religion in consequence of any corruptions of this period; since it appears that these corruptions all pro-

[a] Dan. ii. 41, 42. See Lowth's Commentary.

[b] Not only were great numbers of very valuable books imported into Western Europe by different Greek Emperours on their journeys thither; but, farther, Constantinople had been taken, possessed sixty years, and exhausted of many of its literary treasures by the Western Christians before it was taken by the Turks.

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ceeded in reality from the depravity of our nature, and the want of a proper application of Chriſtianity to counteract and ſubdue it.

Indeed, the corruption of the antediluvian world under the Revelation originally given to mankind, of the Heathen world under the precepts of Noah and the light of nature, of the Jews under the Moſaical covenant, and laſtly of the Chriſtians under the ſecure and eſtabliſhed profeſſion of the Goſpel, all tend to prove the ſame great truths: they tend to prove incontrovertibly both the inveterate depravity of our nature, and that the God of all the nations of the earth has univerſally ordained that the bleſſings, derivable from the religious information which he affords them, ſhall depend in an eminent degree upon their own voluntary and regular uſe of it.

SERMON

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SERMON IV.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

HAVING given a ſketch of the hiſtory of our Religion from the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt to the commencement of the Reformation, I ſhall now proceed to ſtate a few general obſervations concerning the Reformation, and then confine myſelf (according to the plan which I have laid down) to the particular hiſtory of our own Church.

The corruptions, charged on the profeſſors of our Religion in the darker ages, muſt not be ſuppoſed to have paſt, even in the worſt times, without cenſure or without many unſucceſsful attempts towards their reformation. The Church of Chriſt has always had ſome faithful members, who have zealouſly borne witneſs

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witneſs to the truth. In the Eaſt thoſe who oppoſed the prevailing corruptions were often called by general and ambiguous names Maſſaliani or Euchitæ; as thoſe of the Weſt were called Waldenſes or Albigenſes. The former were confounded with wild and irrational heretics of various deſcriptions; and the ſame was the caſe with many of the latter.

Men, who ſmarted under their cenſures, would certainly attempt by every means to leſſen their credit: and ſuch men, it muſt be confeſſed, often had good foundation for the charges which they retorted upon their cenſurers. For it cannot be matter of wonder that the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who condemned the abuſes of it in thoſe ages, ſhould often have wanted knowledge and coolneſs of judgment to point out a proper remedy for the exorbitant evils of which they complained; or that they ſhould often have contradicted each other in matters of the greateſt conſequence.

But however theſe friends to reformation

[a] See Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 147—197.

[b] Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 215.

[c] Concerning the Maſſaliani or Euchitæ ſee Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. p. 199. and concerning the Waldenſes or Albigenſes ſee the ſame work, vol. ii. p. 182.—Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 171, &c.—and Jortin's fourth Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 436, 437.

[d] Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 625 and 697.

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might differ in other reſpects, they were [e] unanimous in aſſerting that the vulgar Religion was falſe and that the Popes were uſurpers. And however ignorant and injudicious ſome of them may appear to have been, there were in the midſt of the dark ages men of erudition and teachers alſo of Religion, who were advocates for a [f] rational profeſſion of Chriſtianity and who knew the proper means by which it was to be promoted. While [g] Arnold of Breſcia diſplays the moſt diſtinguiſhed zeal and learning in preaching againſt the corruptions of the twelfth century; Biſhop [h] Groſthead, Wickliff, and Huſs prove in the [i] three cen-

[e] Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 386.

[f] See Bp. Jewell's Apology for the Church of England, p. 93—96.

[g] Arnold preached in the 12th century for many years with great ſucceſs in Rome itſelf againſt the ſecular power of the Pope and the Clergy. He fell however at length an unhappy victim to his zeal, being burnt in the year 1155. Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 119. See alſo, with regard to Arnold, Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, and the Authors cited by him on the occaſion, vol. iii. p. 169.

[h] A fate ſimilar to Arnold's would certainly have befallen our learned Biſhop Groſthead, if the Pope had not been afraid to proceed to extremities againſt him. Jortin's Rem. vol. v. p. 365. See alſo concerning Groſthead Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 460—2, and Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 181.

[i] Groſthead flouriſhed about the year 1235: Wickliff about 1360; and Huſs was cited to anſwer for his opinions in 1411.

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turies, which immediately followed, that ſuch zeal and learning were likewiſe united with judgment in ſupport of true Chriſtianity long before the ſucceſsful commencement of any reformation in its public profeſſion.

If the paſtors of the Church be held forth as principal cauſes of the profligacy of the darker ages; becauſe, partaking of the common degeneracy and eminently conſpicuous from their ſtation, they contributed more extenſively than the other members of the Chriſtian world to its various corruptions; it ought in juſtice to them to be obſerved at the ſame time, that, during the worſt periods of Chriſtianity, men of their order frequently declaimed againſt the conduct of their brethren and of the people around them, and that they deſiſted not from ſuch bold cenſure till they became the immediate cauſes of the Reformation which at length enſued.

It was not however before the means of acquiring juſt and diſtinct notions of ſacred and profane learning had been ſupplied, nor before ſuch notions had been widely diffuſed, that any general reformation of our Religion was undertaken with ſucceſs. The [k] ſchiſm of

[k] It was during this ſchiſm that Wickliff eſcaped in England, by the interpoſition of the nobles, from two different attempts, which the Archbiſhop of Canterbury and

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the Antipopes and other internal cauſes of decay certainly ſhook the Papal throne; but the whole foundation of Papal tyranny was undermined by the prevalence of ſound and diſcriminating learning. Chriſtianity had been firſt propagated in an age of ſuch learning and was again to revive with it: though not indeed before true Religion had once more experienced the worſt effects from ſuperſtition.

The evils, which had flowed of old from the ſuperſtition and idolatry of the Heathen world, were again experienced under the corruptions of Chriſtianity. [l] Protagoras, Diagoras, and others among the ancients had been made Atheiſts by the wretched idolatry of their country: and [m] ſchools of Atheiſm are ſaid to

and the Clergy made to deſtroy him. Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. xiv. p. 136.

[l] Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 10.

Sherlock ſays in his diſcourſe on Providence, "The "univerſal deluge and the confuſion of languages had ſo "abundantly convinced mankind of a divine power and "Providence, that there was no ſuch creature as an "Atheiſt, till their ridiculous idolatries had tempted ſome "men of wit and thought rather to own no God, than "ſuch as the Heathens worſhipped." P. 204.

[m] Jortin's Rem. vol. v. p. 500. Paracelſus, Rabelais, and Montagne iſſued from this School. And probably thoſe Epicurean Atheiſts of whom Eraſmus obſerves that none exclaimed louder againſt Luther's errors; (Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 283.) and of whom he appears to ſpeak when he ſays, "Ego Romæ hiſce auribus audivi quoſdam

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have been actually opened in Italy towards the close of the dark night of Christian idolatry. Or rather this may be deduced in both instances from the application of an unsound philosophy to the devices of a most degenerate superstition. And indeed it is an effect too sensibly experienced at present in countries, distinguished by such philosophy and such superstition.—But accuracy in human learning and a knowledge of true Christianity were at length to be united and to prevail.

No sooner did the stores of literature, which in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries had been imported from Constantinople, and even under [n] Papal patronage multiplied by the arts of Western Europe, excite a [o] general zeal among the Latins for the study of the learned lan-

"quosdam abominandis blasphemiis debacchantes in "Christum et in illius Apostolos: idque multis mecum "audientibus, et quidem impune. Ibidem multos novi "qui commemorabant se dicta horrenda audiisse a quibus-"dam sacerdotibus aulæ Pontificiæ ministris, idque in "ipsa missa, tam clare ut ea vox ad multorum aures per-"venerit." Epistol. p. 1455. Londini 1642.

[n] That particularly of Pope Nicholas the 5th. Mosh. vol. iii. p. 391.

[o] The education, which Henry the 7th (who was an illiterate Prince) gave to his Son Henry the 8th, and which Henry the 8th gave not only to his Son Prince Edward, but also to both his Daughters Mary and Elizabeth, and the learning of King James may serve to show the zeal excited at this time in favour of the learned languages.

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guages, and particularly of the original [p] Scriptures; than Luther aroſe at the commencement of the next century not only to declaim, like his predeceſſors in reformation, againſt the corruptions of the Romiſh Church; but alſo to ſeparate a conſiderable part of Weſtern Chriſtendom from it.

How far [q] ſeparations may warrantably be made from the eſtabliſhed Religion, it is eaſy enough at preſent to determine. When we

[p] The Scriptures, ſaid the Bp. of Hereford in ſupport of Cranmer, were commonly ſtudied by the Laity in the original languages, and therefore it was in vain to think they could be governed by the arts which in the former ages of ignorance had been ſo effectual. Burnet's Hiſt. of the Ref. vol. i. p. 214.

Among thoſe who were diſtinguiſhed about the time of the Reformation, as the great revivers of literature both ſacred and profane, Eraſmus ſtands foremoſt. He, as was commonly ſaid of the Reformation, laid the egg and Luther hatched it. Bp. Stillingfleet expreſsly ſays, "It "was not Luther or Zuinglius that contributed ſo much "to the Reformation as Eraſmus, eſpecially among us in "England. For Eraſmus was the man who awakened "men's underſtandings, and brought them from the "Friar's Divinity to a reliſh of general Learning."

It is remarkable that Eraſmus's Edition of the Greek Teſtament was publiſhed in 1516, the year before the commencement of Luther's Reformation. Before this publication Stillingfleet ſays there was not above one Greek Teſtament to be found in all Germany. Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. ii. p. 64.

[q] See on this ſubject Chillingworth's Safe-Way, &c. Folio, 4th Edit. 1674. p. 196—240.

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have eſſential objections to oppoſe to fundamental articles of it, we are juſtifiable in deſerting it. Prior and invincible obligations to truth demand ſuch conduct from us. That it was difficult for men to determine this queſtion in ages of ignorance, ſuperſtition, and perſecution, is exceedingly probable: that it was both dangerous and difficult to effect any religious ſeparation under ſuch circumſtances cannot be doubted.

[r]Luther however ſucceeded in the arduous enterpriſe. Early in the 16th century this learned eccleſiaſtic dared publicly to arraign both the tyranny and ſuperſtition of the Romiſh Church: and, whatever might have been his original motives of action, it is certain that he was the great inſtrument, which Providence was pleaſed to uſe in the reformation of our Religion, and that through his [s]unparalleled courage and perſeverance

[r] See a ſhort and excellent account of him in Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. p. 249—250. Append.

[s] "Luther had as much courage as Alexander and "Julius Cæſar put together." Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 258. He was, as Cave ſays, "vir ſi quis alius "invicti atque imperterriti animi." Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. App. p. 250. Though he had the perfidious and cruel treatment of Huſs before his eyes, he ventured to defend his cauſe in an open diſputation with the Romaniſts. What his danger on the occaſion was, we may infer from the reproaches, with which the Emperor Charles loaded himſelf for having

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thoſe nations of Northern Europe, which had been converted to Chriſtianity by the [t] ſword, were among the firſt who had an unreſtrained acceſs to the holy Scriptures.

From his time Chriſtianity began to aſſume its genuine appearance. And ſo much were mankind pleaſed with the proſpect, which now opened upon them, that Luther did not long ſtand forth the ſole adverſary of Papal corruption. He was ſoon joined by adherents, ſufficient in number and influence to enſure, under Providence, the ſecurity of his perſon and the future ſucceſs of his cauſe. And though theſe, like former advocates for re-

ing ſuffered him to retire afterwards under the ſolemn engagement which had been made for his perſonal ſafety. When the affairs of the poor Proteſtants about the year 1530 were ſo bad in all appearance, that Melancthon was quite dejected and overwhelmed with ſorrow, Jortin ſays (Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 500) that Luther, who had more courage, wrote him many excellent letters of conſolation. It may be remarked even with regard to the violence, which appears to have been the conſequence of Luther's undaunted ſpirit, that it was really neceſſary under his circumſtances. He could not have been ſupported againſt the Church of Rome, except by an open breach and force of arms. Had he fallen in with the mild and timid meaſures, ſo often recommended to him by Eraſmus; the Reformation in Germany would ſoon have been ſtifled by a bloody inquiſition, as it was in Spain and other countries.

[t] See the preceding Sermon.

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formation, might differ from each other in particular tenets; yet, like thoſe alſo, they univerſally agreed in the neceſſity of pulling down that fabrick of pride aud ſuperſtition which had ſo long been venerated in the See of Rome.

Were it poſſible, within the limits of the preſent Diſcourſe, to inveſtigate the progreſs of the Reformation which enſued in different countries; the inveſtigation would certainly furniſh us with much uſeful entertainment. It would however at the ſame time furniſh us with diſcoveries humiliating to the pride of man. We ſhould find that ſome of the worſt paſſions of our nature were exerted by injudicious zeal in the propagation of truth; and that perſecutions of the moſt cruel kind were uſed to influence religious Faith, in a greater or leſs degree, by every [u]reformed Commu-

[u] Dean Tucker, in his Letters to Dr. Kippis, ſays,—(p. 31.) "ſtrange as it is to tell, there was not a man of "all the numerous Sects of Proteſtants at their firſt ſepa-"ration from the Church of Rome, who ſo far entered "into the ſpirit of the Reformation, or was ſo far con-"ſiſtent with his own principles, as to allow to others the "liberty which he claimed to himſelf." And (p. 32.) he ſays farther, "the idea of being a conſiſtent Proteſtant "never entered into the head of any man for upwards of "ſeventy years after the Reformation began." Even Melanchthon juſtified the burning of Servetus for hereſy, or blaſphemy, as he calls it. Jortin's 4th Charge, Sermons, vol. vii. p. 440.

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nion. We ſhould find alſo (to ſay nothing of the enormous opinions of [w] Socinus and his followers which were propagated on this occaſion) that many of the bright ornaments of the Reformation were not able to diſengage themſelves from error in [x] important doctrines of our Religion; and that this was by no means effected even by Luther himſelf.

We know in our own country that heretics were not only put to death in the time of Henry the 8th, Edward the 6th, and Elizabeth; but alſo ſo late as in the 9th year of James the 1ſt. Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. XVII. p. 64.

Our law for burning heretics was firſt made in the reign of Hen. IV. Fuller, Cent. XV. p. 158. It was repealed in the year 1677. The repeal was moved for by the Duke of York. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 897.

[w] Lælius and Fauſtus Socinus were the founders of the Sect which bears their name. Lælius, having conceived a diſguſt againſt Popery, left Tuſcany (his native land) in 1547: and after travelling into different countries, where the Reformation was going forward, he ſettled at Zurich in Switzerland, and died there in the year 1562, in the 37th year of his age. His religious ſentiments, which during his life had been communicated to a few friends only, were propagated in a more public manner afterwards by Fauſtus his nephew and heir, who is ſuppoſed to have drawn from his papers that religious ſyſtem upon which the ſect of Socinians is founded.

In Grotius's treatiſe "de Satisfactione" an anſwer is given to the arguments of Socinus againſt the doctrine of Chriſt's atonement. This treatiſe was attacked by Crellius, and again Crellius was very ably replied to by Bp. Stillingfleet.

[x] Concerning the Euchariſt, and Predeſtination.

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But my deſign will be accompliſhed and the limits of the preſent Diſcourſe filled up, if, after this notice of the Reformation in general, I confine the following obſervations to our own Church, and conſider its condition at the commencement of the Reformation, and the manner in which this Reformation was ſo introduced and perfected among ourſelves, as to deliver down the profeſſion of our Religion to us with all thoſe peculiar advantages under which we have received it.

As error generally increaſes in proportion to its diſtance from its fountain, and to the number of channels through which it is conveyed; it is reaſonable to expect that England ſhould not only have partaken of all the Romiſh corruptions in common with the reſt of Weſtern Chriſtendom, but alſo that it ſhould have experienced more ſenſibly than other countries the burden of Papal ſuperſtition and oppreſſion. And [y] this appears in reality to have been at

[y] Burnet in the preface to his Hiſtory of the Reformation ſpeaks of the Church of England as a Church, "which, being ſubjected to the See of Rome, had been "more than every other part of Europe moſt tame under "its oppreſſions, and was moſt deeply drenched in its "ſuperſtition." P. 9. Bp. Newton ſays in his Diſſertations, Works, vol. ii. p. 619. 4to. "England was once "the paradiſe of Prieſts; here they ſwarmed and fixed "like locuſts: but the Reformation has freed us from "that yoke." And Jortin aſſerts that "of all Proteſtant "nations

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length the caſe. Our anceſtors were not involved in equal corruptions of their Religion with the other members of the Romiſh Communion in the early parts of their Hiſtory: but they appear to have ſurpaſſed all others in this unhappy reſpect during the three [z] hundred years which immediately preceded the Reformation.

Chriſtianity was profeſſed at a very [a] early period by the Britons, and [b] flouriſhed for many ages among them without [c] dependence upon any foreign Church, till Auguſtine the monk

" nations there is perhaps not one which hath ſuffered ſo " much from Popery as ours, nor one which hath more " reaſon to dread and abhor that Religion. England for " ſome centuries before the Reformation was the moſt " Pope-ridden country in Chriſtendom," &c. 3d Charge: Sermons, vol. vii. p. 406.

[z] England had for above 300 years been the tameſt part of " Chriſtendom to the Papal Authority, and had " been accordingly dealt with." Burnet's Hiſt. of the Ref. vol. i. p. 11.

[a] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. p. 35—48. Towards the end of this part of his work he produces arguments to prove that the Goſpel was planted in Britain by St. Paul. The ſame is inſiſted on by Jewell—Works, p. 11.

[b] Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 74. and Jewell's Works, p. 11, 12.

[c] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 108—144, and p. 356—364: and alſo Bingham's Antiquities, b. ix. c. 1. ſect. 11.

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was ſent from Rome in the [d] ſixth century to convert the Saxons. Before that time the Britons of both North and South Wales were diſtinguiſhed by eminent [e] ſeminaries of Chriſtian education, and, as it appears, of genuine Chriſtianity. The [f] Arian hereſy had been ſoon ſuppreſſed among them.

And, on Auguſtine's [g] arrival, the poor Britiſh Chriſtians were found enjoying God, the Goſpel, and their mountains, neither regarding, nor acquainted with, the ceremonies which this miſſionary had brought with him.

[d] As is commonly ſuppoſed in the year 596. Johnſon however in the preface to his Dictionary places it in the year 570. Hiſt. of the Engl. Lang. p. 1.

[e] Bangor in North Wales and Caerlion in South Wales were the two grand ſeminaries of Chriſtianity in the 6th century. To theſe many of the learned at that time reſorted for inſtruction. Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. VI. p. 40. Stillingfleet ſays of Bangor, "that men were bred up in it to "learning and devotion together; and ſo it more reſem-"bled our colleges than the Egyptian Monaſteries." Orig. Brit. p. 205.

[f] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 175. Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. v. p. 27. and Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 37.

Though Bede ſays, l. i. c. 8. that Arianiſm had infected Britain, as well as other places; yet Smith in his note on the paſſage ſubjoins, "E teſtimoniis Conſtantini, Athanaſii, Hilarii, &c. abunde patet epiſcopos Britanniæ fidei orthodoxæ ſemper adhæſiſſe." Smith's Edit. of Bede, p. 47.

[g] Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. VI. p. 57, &c.

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When he assembled a council of the British and Saxon Bishops, the former [h] disclaimed all knowledge of the Bishop of Rome and all dependence upon him. Their religious institutions also were rational and simple: they had the use of the pure [i] liturgy of the old Gallican Church; had no [k] image-worship; and no [l] Monks, but such as were all of the most ancient and temperate order.

[h] Fuller's Hist. Cent. VII. p. 61. The answer of the Abbot of Bangor to Augustine is well worthy of our particular attention both on account of the Spirit of Christian charity, and the spirit of independence, which are conspicuous in it. "Notum sit et absque dubitatione "vobis quod nos omnes sumus et quilibet nostrum obe- "dientes et subditi ecclesiæ Dei et Papæ Romæ, et uni- "cuique vero et pio Christiano ad amandum unumquem- "que in suo gradu in perfecta charitate; et ad juvandum "unumquemque eorum verbo et facto fore filios Dei: Et "aliam obedientiam quam istam non scio debitam in quem "vos nominatis esse Papam, nec esse patrem patrum, vin- "dicari et postulari, et istam obedientiam nos sumus pa- "rati dare et solvere ei et cuique Christiano continuo." Spelman's Concilia, tom. i. p. 108, 109.

[i] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. from p. 216. to the end of the fourth Chapter.

[k] Image-worship was not introduced into England before the 8th century: and then it was subjected to restraints. See Spelman's Council, tom. i. p. 218. Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 122, and 214. See also in the preceding Sermon what is said on the manner in which England, France, &c. received this worship.

[l] In Fuller's Hist. b. vi. p. 267. may be seen a declaration very elegantly composed and signed by those four

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Even their Saxon conquerors appear to have partaken afterwards in ſome degree of the liberty and purity of the Britiſh Chriſtians. The venerable [m] Bede paid no implicit ſubmiſſion to the Romiſh Pontiff. And in the 10th and 11th [n] centuries, when hardly any traces of Britons were left in England, the Papal power was received with limitation among our anceſtors, the Scriptures were generally read by them, (notwithſtanding what is ſaid to have been the [o] original and contrary intention of the Romiſh Miſſionaries,) and our Religion was leſs corrupted in various reſpects than that of the neighbouring Kingdoms. William himſelf, though he con-

great men, Robt. Cotton, John Selden, Hen. Spelman, and Wm. Camden, in which they maintain that there had been only two orders of Monks in England, one the Egyptian which flouriſhed before the time of Auguſtine, the other the Benedictine which flouriſhed afterwards.

Of the Egyptian Monks Euſebius ſpeaks very highly. Eccl. Hiſt. l. ii. c. 17. Sozomen alſo ſays of them, that they were remarkably ſtrenuous in their oppoſition to Arianiſm. Eccl. Hiſt. l. vi. c. 20.

[m] Bede, though often ſent for by the Biſhops of Rome, never went to them, which is a proof that he neither thought it neceſſary to obey thoſe Biſhops, nor that there was any particular ſanctity in Rome. Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. VIII. p. 98.

[n] See Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. p. 110. Fuller's Hiſt. p. 149. and Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 166.

[o] See extract from Fleury in Jortin's Rem. vol. v. p. 174.

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quered under the banners of the Church, refuſed to ſubmit to any act of fealty to the Pope: indeed he is ſaid to have gone ſo far, as to [p] regulate the power both of the Archbiſhop of Canterbury and the Pope. In the ſucceeding reigns alſo the Pope's power among us was often reſtrained by interpoſitions of the civil authority.

But though our early anceſtors were exempt from religious corruption beyond the common ſtandard of their times; and though temporal protection was not wanting in later periods to ſupport both our Church in [q] general, and alſo many of its [r] particular members who were labouring to promote the intereſts of true Chriſtianity; yet the power of the Romiſh Church univerſally prevailed at the concluſion of our different conteſts with it after the tra-

[p] Fuller's Hiſt. Cent. xi. p. 4. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 238. and Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 473. 496.

[q] By the conſtitutions of Clarendon under Hen. II. By the ſtatute againſt foreſtalling preſentations under Edw. III. and the præmunire annexed to it 16 Ric. II.

[r] Wickliff, when twice ſummoned by the Archbiſhop to anſwer for his doctrines, was reſcued from condemnation by the interpoſition of the nobles, and having finiſhed his tranſlation of the vulgate Bible, he died in peace. Fuller, Cent. xiv. p. 136—7. Under the protection of Lord Berkeley, John de Treviſa tranſlated alſo the Old Teſtament in the 14th century. Fuller, p. 151. and Cave's Hiſt. Lit. vol. ii. Sæc. Wickl. p. 58.

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gical end of [s] Becket's violence; and its [t] corruptions of every kind went on increaſing among us to ſuch an enormous degree, as to give our anceſtors in the days of Luther peculiar reaſon to rejoice at the proſpect which now opened upon them of a reformed and pure Religion.

However, at the commencement of the Reformation, the forward and [u] repeated zeal with which [w] Henry the Eighth undertook the defence of the eſtabliſhed ſuperſtition, and the literary [x], as well as [y] religious credit, which he

[s] Eraſmus in his Epiſtles ſeems to aſcribe the great power and wealth of the Engliſh Eccleſiaſtics to the death of Thomas of Becket. Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 37. And the exorbitant influence of the Papal power among us may be properly dated from the ſame event.

[t] See Strype's Memorials, vol. i. p. 46. and p. 382.

[u] The King wrote two letters to Luther. Strype's Mem. vol. i. p. 58. The ſecond letter was a haughty reply to Luther, when he apologized for the offence given by a letter written in anſwer to the King's firſt. Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 395.

[w] Eraſmus diſcuſſes the queſtion, whether Hen. VIII. was really and "proprio marte" the author of the Book againſt Luther, and he inclines to the affirmative: not denying, however, that he might have had the aſſiſtance of ſome learned men. Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 486.

[x] Eraſmus pays Henry VIII. very high compliments on his genius. Strype's Append. of Rec. Memorials, vol. i. p. 274.

[y] Burnet ſays K. Henry was brought to fancy his book was written with ſome degree of inſpiration. Pref. Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 6.

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acquired from thence, left little reaſon to hope that his ſubjects would derive any diſtinguiſhed advantage from the new and prevailing ſpirit of religious inquiry.

But the Almighty, who often makes the ſelf-intereſted deſigns of men redound to his glory, ſoon unexpectedly opened the King's eyes with regard to the uſurpations of the Romiſh Pontiff.

The refuſal of a diſpenſation to himſelf ſoon led the diſappointed Prince to inquire into the Pope's right to grant ſuch favours. And inquiry, once ſet on foot, found too much encouragement to be eaſily dropped or to be confined to a ſingle article. This and the other foreign claims of the Romiſh Church were diſcovered, on particular examination, to be deſtitute of ſupport from either reaſon or revelation. On this occaſion nothing leſs than a total diſavowal of the Papal power, and the Romiſh communion, might immediately have been expected; if thoſe prejudices of Henry, which at firſt had well-nigh prevented all reformation among us, had not now interpoſed for uſeful purpoſes; if they had not interpoſed to reſtrain the ardour and vehemence to which religious innovations are eminently liable, and thus laid the foundation of our preſent Church eſtabliſhment.

It muſt be confeſſed indeed that many circumſtances

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cumſtances in the three next reigns contributed to ſtrengthen and confirm the religious ſyſtem, which was adopted by the Church of England at the commencement of the Reformation; and that our reformers had an invaluable [a]advantage in chooſing their doctrines from not having been engaged in perſonal altercation with the chief champions for either the Romaniſts or their opponents. But, it is no leſs true alſo, that the particular character of our Reformation is principally to be aſcribed to Henry's determined prepoſſeſſion, to the very laſt, in favour of the Romiſh tenets.—Whilſt the ſix articles, which were enforced by him with ſo much cruelty, proved deciſively that this King's efforts and wiſhes for an alienation from the Church of Rome went no farther than was conducive to his own power or profit; they operated at the ſame time as the moſt effectual reſtraint on all haſty avowals of new opinions in Religion.

It is a juſt obſervation that extremes generate each other: and never was the obſervation more literally verified, than in the reformation which commonly took place in [a]foreign coun-

[a] See Dean Tucker's Letters to Dr. Kippis.

[a] A full and admirable account of the principles and proceedings of theſe reformers may be ſeen in the preface to Hooker's Eccl. Pol. from p. 19. to p. 22. Works, Folio Ed. 1666.

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tries. Men had been hindered by the moſt cruel oppreſſion from inquiring into the Scriptures. When therefore the light of truth broke in at once upon them, its glare was too ſtrong for their ſight. The full religious liberty, to which they were at once admitted, led them to exceſſes as fatal as thoſe of the Church of Rome, though in the oppoſite extreme. Every thing, which bore a reſemblance to that Church, was at [b]length aboliſhed as Antichriſtian. Nor were inſtitutions tried by their own intrinſic merit, but by the affinity which they bore to the Romiſh uſages. I ſpeak not of thoſe wild Fanatics, who, under the name of Anabaptiſts, did ſo much injury to the cauſe of the Reformation about the time of its commencement, and who doubtleſs ought not to be ranked under any claſs of reformers. Even [c]Luther had often to lament the

[b] "Every later Church endeavoured to be certain de-"grees more removed from conformity with the Church "of Rome than the reſt before had been." Pref. Hooker's Eccl. Pol. p. 2.

[c] Moſheim, vol. iv. p. 315. Luther alſo cannot be ſuppoſed to write concerning the Anabaptiſt or Mennonite aſſociates of Munzer, but men of his own communion; when he requeſts of Frederic, Duke of Tuſcany, that the enthuſiaſts, concerning whom he writes, "might be fa-"vourably dealt with and ſpared: for that (their error "excepted) they ſeemed otherwiſe right good men." Hooker's Eccl. Pol. Præf. p. 21. To the ſame effect the Romaniſts urge againſt Luther, however inconcluſively, that

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enthuſiaſtic errors of his followers: and [d]Calvin was himſelf ſo intemperate, that he particularly cautions Bucer againſt middle or moderate councils.

While therefore [e]others went on with enthuſiaſm and immoderate exceſs in their reformation, Henry's prejudices and overbearing diſpoſition ſeaſonably interpoſed to counterbalance any ſuch ſpirit in his dominions, and unintentionally produced among us an unprecedented [f]calmneſs of deliberation upon ſubjects of religious controverſy.

The [g]principal points, eſtabliſhed and [h]enforced againſt the Romiſh Church in his reign, after the diſſolution of thoſe monaſtic bodies

that his doctrine had raiſed ſo many ſects and ſeditions within the eighteen years, during which it had been publiſhed, that it could not come from God. Father Paul's Hiſt. of the Council of Trent, p. 70.

[d] Calvin warns Martin Bucer in a letter ſent to him, before his coming into England, "againſt being the author or adviſer of middle councils; by which words he plainly ſtrikes at the moderation obſerved in the Engliſh Reformation." Wheatly on the Common Prayer, 8vo. p. 112.

[e] See, on this ſubject in general, Hume's Hiſt. of England, vol. iii. p. 122, &c. 4to Ed.

[f] Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 255 and 289.

[g] Burnet's Pref. to his Hiſt. Ref.

[h] In the reign of Hen. VIII. many of the errors of popery were laid open, and condemned in the "Pia et Catholica Inſtitutio," or, as it was called, when republiſhed ſix years after, "the Kings Book" or "the neceſſary Erudition;"

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which had for many ages been powerful means of ſupporting the Papal pretenſions, were the diſavowal of the Pope's ſupremacy in theſe Kingdoms, and of his infallibility; the acknowledgment of a right in every national Church, with the concurrence of its head or civil ruler, to examine into and reform all religious errors and corruptions, whether in Doctrine or Diſcipline: and, what might be deſigned to operate as the means of vindicating theſe infringements on the former government of the Church, the permiſſion of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue.

But, whatever might be the political deſign of this permiſſion of the Scriptures, it operated to the beſt religious purpoſes. It was the one great thing wanted in the darker ages: and, joined to the permiſſion, which was alſo ſuperadded in the ſame reign, of ſome of the [i]principal parts of the Liturgy in the vulgar tongue, effectually promoted both the knowledge and the practice of true Chriſtianity. From theſe points, [k]eſtabliſhed and enforced

" Erudition;" but none were obliged to aſſent to it. Burnet on the Articles, Fol. p. 5. Strype's Memor. vol. i. p. 378 and 381.

[i] See Wheatly on the Common Prayer. And Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 226 and 249.

[k] " Many attempts were made by Gardiner and others " to induce the King to deprive the people again of the " uſe of the Scriptures. But Henry the 8th was fully " reſolved

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by the moſt [l]determined authority, a general reformation was ſoon to be expected. The abſurdities and impieties of the Romiſh Church cannot long remain undiſcovered by thoſe, who have acceſs to the Scriptures, and who are at liberty to uſe their own judgment in the interpretation of them.

The ſucceeding reign, being an entire minority, happily required in the Regents much deliberation before any great alterations were to be made in the old Religion. Happily alſo the influence of the regal power was ſufficient to reſtrain the effects of any [m]contrary inclination in others. At the time therefore when the rulers of our Church were moſt engaged in its reformation, and moſt expoſed to danger from the [n]advice as well as the example of foreign reformers, they made no [o]raſh advances.

"reſolved to go through with it." Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 314.

[l] It has been remarked that Hen. VIII. reſembled Luther in the firmneſs and inflexibleneſs of his mind. No other frame of mind could have ſupported them in the different reformations which they attempted.

[m] There were among our countrymen in the days of Edw. VI. many who wiſhed to run into the exceſſes of foreign reformers: but they appear to have been neither violent nor troubleſome, when compared with others of the ſame principles in ſubſequent times.

[n] See, as before, Wheatly on the Common Prayer, p. 112. 8vo.

[o] It was deſigned by Cranmer and his friends to carry on

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The doctrines of the Romiſh Church, which had been much and diſpaſſionately [p] canvaſſed in the preceding reign, were again examined by men of learning, of judgment, and of candour: and thoſe among them, which were inconſiſtent with genuine Chriſtianity, were gradually rejected; tranſubſtantiation, which was among the lateſt corruptions of the Romiſh Church and which had made the moſt durable impreſſion on the minds both of men of [q] lēarn-

on the reformation by ſlow degrees, not hazarding too much at once. Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 25.

See a proclamation againſt thoſe who ſhould raſhly innovate, or perſuade people from the old accuſtomed rites. Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 59. Strype's Mem. vol. ii. p. 83.

The preachers alſo were urged to uſe caution and moderation: not to ſet the people on to make innovation: and for things not yet changed to wait patiently. Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 61, 64, 65.

But it is impoſſible that the principles of the Engliſh reformation ſhould be better deſcribed than they are by Bp. Jewell in his admirable Apology for our Church: "Nos quidem (ſays he) uti diximus de mutanda religione "nihil temere aut inſolenter, nihil niſi cunctanter et "magna cum deliberatione fecimus, &c. p. 155. See alſo Jewell's Epiſt. de Concil. Trident. § 32.

[p] They had many learned men among them who had been "examining theſe matters many years." Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 26.

[q] Luther was a conſtant advocate for tranſubſtantiation, or at leaſt for conſubſtantiation.

Cranmer and Ridley were themſelves in the dark concerning the corporal preſence, till Bertram's book firſt

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ing and of the [r] people in general, being reſerved for the laſt [s] object of our Reformation.

In the mean time alſo the [t] oppoſition, permitted to the Romaniſts at home, was of no inconſiderable ſervice to the cauſe againſt which it was levelled; ſince alterations were not made, till the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of them had been fully and openly proved. And if, under ſuch circumſtances, our reformers were obliged to contend for every ſtep as they proceeded; they and their ſucceſſors derived this advantage at leaſt from the laborious

convinced Ridley. Burnet's Pref. to Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 10.

Thus Ridley alſo himſelf, after ſpeaking in his "Proteſtatio" very highly of Bertram, ſays, "hic mihi primus aurem vulſit et a pervulgato Eccleſiæ Romanenſis "errore ad diligentiorem Scripturæ et veterum eccleſiaſticorum hac in re (ſcil. de præſentia reali) inveſtigationem "primus ire coegit."

[r] Burnet ſays that on account of the prejudices of the people it was neceſſary to open the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation fully before any change was made in the doctrine of the Church. Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 104.

Again he ſays, "as to the corporal preſence in the Sacrament there were diſputes for a year together in K. "Edward's time before there was any determination "made." Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 267. See alſo p. 110.

[s] Hume ſays it was the laſt doctrine of Popery which was wholly abandoned by the people; aſſigning the reaſons why it was ſo. Hiſt. of Engl. vol. iii. p. 319. 4to. Edit.

[t] Strype's Memor. vol. ii. p. 84 and 208. Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 105.

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contention, that the ground, thus gained, was more eaſily tenable in future times.

While the Engliſh Reformation was thus gradually matured, the ſuperintenders of this great work were careful to make known the different parts of their new eſtabliſhment. Having finally ſeparated themſelves from the Church of Rome, through which they traced back their origin to the apoſtolical age; it was neceſſary that they ſhould prove themſelves to be a viſible Church; and, agreeably to the [u]precepts of the Apoſtles and the practice of all Chriſtian ſocieties, that they ſhould inſtitute rites and ceremonies, a public form of worſhip, and particular modes of inſtruction. And, ſince the Scriptures are not ſo explicit in all points, as to preclude all pernicious doctrines; and the authoritative interpretations of the Church of Rome had been diſclaimed; it was neceſſary alſo that certain doctrinal expoſitions and deciſions ſhould be ſet forth to direct the conſciences and to guard the faith of the members of their community.

Somewhat of this ſort had been publicly done by the foreign Proteſtants in different [w]confeſſions of their Faith.

In the Church of England it was done by

[u] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

[w] That of Auſburgh and others: ſee "Corpus et Syntagma Confeſſionum." Genevæ 1612.

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the [x]Liturgy, the [y]Catechiſm, the [z]Homilies, and the [a]Articles, which were authoritatively ſet forth in the reign of Edward the Sixth. By means of all theſe whatever appeared to be expedient to an eſtabliſhed and national profeſſion of our religion, in addition to the

[x] Our Liturgy may be ſaid to have commenced in the year 1537, when Henry the Eighth permitted the Convocation to ſet forth the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the ſeven Sacraments in the vulgar tongue. Many of the additions made to complete it, which are erroneouſly ſuppoſed to have been taken by the reformers from the Romaniſts, were, as Stillingfleet ſays, adopted by both the Romaniſts and our reformers from the old Gallican Liturgy. Orig. Brit. p. 231.

And from Cave we may learn that our Service for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is nearly the ſame in ſubſtance, as that which was uſed in the primitive Church. See Cave's Prim. Chriſt. vol. i. chap. 11.

Our Liturgy was not completed in any degree before the year 1547, when it was publiſhed under Edward the Sixth. See a particular account of the alterations ſince made in it, &c. in Wheatly. See alſo concerning it Strype's Memor. vol. ii. p. 85.

[y] See Strype's Memor. vol. ii. p. 32, 368, 420. We are not however to ſuppoſe that the original Catechiſm contained all that is found in our Catechiſm at preſent. With the expoſition of the Lord's Prayer "ended the "Catechiſm in all the Common Prayer Books before "that of K. James the Firſt, who after the Conference "at Hampton Court ordered this latter part concerning "the Sacraments to be added." See Dr. Nicholls on the Common Prayer in loc.

[z] See Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 27.

[a] See the ſame, p. 209. of the Records.

unreſtrained

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unreſtrained uſe of the Scriptures, was abundantly ſupplied. The great duties and principles of Chriſtianity were laid down; and the important errors, as well of the Romaniſts as of the more violent Proteſtants both at home and abroad, were particularly guarded againſt.

At the ſame time the Epiſcopal government, which had prevailed from the earlieſt ages of Chriſtianity, was preſerved inviolate: and our reformers conſpicuouſly diſplayed their moderation by retaining various parts of the old Liturgies, and as many of the more important uſages and ceremonies of the Church, as were innocent and conducive to order and decency; a moderation, which at once reſtrained the ardour of innovation among their own countrymen, and proved to all mankind, that they were deſirous to retain whatever was venerable in eccleſiaſtical antiquity, and to join with the Romaniſts not only in eſſential doctrines of Chriſtianity, but alſo in [b] all thoſe matters of Church worſhip which are in any reſpect uſeful and decorous.

Our Reformation, having proceeded thus far

[b] See the rule which the reformers laid down to change nothing for novelty's ſake. Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 73.

See alſo an excellent account and vindication of the proceedings of the Church of England in this reſpect in Hooker's Eccl. Pol. b. iv. c. 14.

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in the reign of the ſixth Edward, was ſoon after checked in its progreſs. The reign of Mary was diſtinguiſhed by a reeſtabliſhment of Popiſh ſuperſtition. But the continuance of her reign was too ſhort to root out the zeal for religious purity, which had ſo widely extended itſelf among us. Short however as it was, it involved our Church in many immediate evils, and laid the foundation of numberleſs others which we were afterwards to experience.

The bloody perſecutions, which raged at that time, were without doubt moſt ſenſibly felt during their continuance. But the moſt extenſive evils of thoſe cruelties will be diſcovered in their remote conſequences; in the alteration made in the opinions of ſome of our Engliſh divines concerning predeſtination, and other concomitant and important doctrines; and in the invincible averſion from our Church which afterwards prevailed among many of its former members.

Our Liturgy, Catechiſm, and Homilies, the treatiſes drawn up for the inſtruction of the people and the reformation of the eccleſiaſtical laws under the authority of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, and the private writings of our original reformers themſelves, all prove deciſively, that they [c] ſided with Eraſmus and

[c] Biſhop Bull ſays, "a Calvini cum diſciplina tum doc-
"trina (qua parte ipſe a Melanchone aliiſque inſtaurati
"purioris

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Melancthon, and not with Luther or Calvin, in the doctrines which relate to the divine decrees.

Indeed, our Articles, which have not been [d] materially altered in this reſpect, prove alſo

" purioris Chriſtianiſmi magiſtris antiquioribus abierit) " prorſus alienos fuiſſe reformationis noſtræ auctores ſatis " conſtat, &c." Apol. pro Harmon. p. 57. And the Paraphraſe of Eraſmus, who wrote againſt Luther on the doctrine of predeſtination, is known to have been placed in our churches for the inſtruction of the people by both Edward the Sixth and Elizabeth. What Moſheim ſays on the ſubject ought to be applied to our firſt reformers: for it was by them that the doctrine and diſcipline of our Church were modelled. " If we conſider, ſays he, the " genius and ſpirit of the Church of England during this " period (the beginning of the 17th century) we ſhall " plainly ſee that the doctrine of the Gomariſts concerning " predeſtination and grace could not meet there with a " favourable reception; ſince the leading doctors of that " Church were zealous in modelling its doctrines and diſ- " cipline after the ſentiments and inſtitutions, that were " received in the primitive times; and ſince thoſe early " fathers, whom they followed with a profound ſubmiſ- " ſion, had never preſumed before Auguſtine to ſet limits " to the extent of the divine grace and mercy." Eccl. Hiſt. vol. v. p. 369, 370.

See alſo Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 645 and 648: and for the whole of the queſtion concerning the opinions of our firſt reformers on the divine decrees, ſee Heylyn's Hiſt. of the Quinquarticular controverſy. Tracts, p. 541—588. See moreover able vindications of our firſt reformers on the ſubject before us in Dr. Nowell's Reply to Pietas Oxonienſis, Dean Tucker's Letters to Dr. Kippis, and Dr. Wincheſter's Diſſertation on the 17th Article.

[d] See Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. Records, p. 209.

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the ſame. For whatever [e] latitude of interpretation the firſt part of the 17th Article may admit, our original reformers vindicated their own opinion on the doctrine of predeſtination by the concluding clauſe of this Article; [f] a clauſe, which undoubtedly is not to be conſtrued in a Calviniſtic ſenſe, and which from the beginning has been juſtly deemed to convey the determination of the Church of England on this important doctrine; as in fact was [g] declared and admitted in the religious conference,

[e] This was admitted principally to gratify Bucer and Peter Martyr.

[f] It refers immediately to a paragraph in the Saxonic Confeſſion publiſhed by Melancthon in the ſame year, in which our Articles were firſt publiſhed, which paragraph is proved deciſively to be Arminian by the words which follow. See the Saxonic Confeſſion, p. 84. in the "Corpus et Syntagma Confeſſionum." Genevæ 1612.

[g] Biſhop Bancroft at the conference in the firſt year of James the Firſt declared expreſsly that the doctrine of the Church of England on the ſubject of predeſtination was contained in this concluding clauſe. And what makes his declaration the more worthy of obſervation is, that he was one of the three Biſhops who ſigned the Lambeth Articles; (Archbiſhop Whitgift and Vaughan Biſhop of Bangor being the other two, and Hutton Archbiſhop of York agreeing with them.) See Fuller's Church Hiſt. Book ix. p. 230. To this declaration K. James aſſented. Fuller's Hiſt. b. x. p. 11. See alſo to this effect Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 676.

Correſpondently with this Burnet ſays, "that the "Church of England has wiſely avoided the ſplitting "aſunder on the high points of divine decrees, which "have

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held in the firſt year of the next reign after the final eſtabliſhment of theſe Articles.

But the Lambeth Articles, which were propoſed as an addition to the eſtabliſhed Articles of our Church, and the ſubſcription of our delegates to the deciſions of the Synod of Dort, prove that Calvin's tenets concerning the divine decrees obtained afterwards for a [h] time among ſome of the rulers of our Church. This change of religious opinion is [i] juſtly reckoned in the number of the evils, which reſulted from the reſidence of many zealous members of our Communion during Queen Mary's perſecution among the advocates for abſolute predeſtination; and to this very day is found both to have a pernicious influence on the faith of ſome of our injudicious brethren, and to give apparent ſanction to the

"have broken ſo many of the reformed beyond ſea; "but in theſe has left divines to the freedom of their own "opinion." Pref. vol. ii. Hiſt. Ref. p. 15.

[h] Our ſubſequent divines were brought back to the opinions of our firſt reformers on predeſtination &c. by Archbiſhop Laud and Biſhop Bull. Waterland aſcribes it to the writings of the latter. Defence, Pref. p. 9.

[i] Strype in his Life of Archbiſhop Whitgift ſays, "that till about the year 1595 Calvin's way of explaining "the divine decrees was not entertained by many learned "men in the Univerſity of Cambridge: but theſe opi- "nions were introduced by ſome of our Divines who dur- "ing the perſecution under Queen Mary had fled to Ge- "neva, Zurich," &c. p. 435.

malevolent

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malevolent and [k] general ſarcaſms of our enemies.

Other remote and pernicious conſequences of the perſecution of Queen Mary diſcover themſelves in the invincible averſion from our Church, which prevailed among many of its members who had been obliged during her reign to ſeek for ſhelter in foreign countries; and who, when the ſtorm which drove them from their home had ſpent its fury, returned not with any affection for their old Communion. They had been driven from their country by the perſecuting ſpirit of the Romiſh Church; they naturally therefore carried with them a hatred of this Church: and the ex-

[k] When Mr. Gibbon ſarcaſtically cenſures the firſt reformers for their tenets concerning predeſtination, his cenſures are qualified by no exceptions, vol. v. p. 537. It may be remarked with regard to the doctrine of predeſtination, that the diſcredit of it ought never to be thrown by our adverſaries excluſively, or even principally, on the reformers. Though, as Biſhop Bull very juſtly ſays, "it was never thought of for the four firſt ages," nor even after that time by the Greek Church; yet it appears to have been part of the creed of the leading men in the Romiſh Communion from the time of its great advocate Auguſtine to that of the Reformation. It interfered however too evidently with the doctrine of merit to be openly taught by them in the later ages. See Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, vol. i. p. 335; Dean Tucker's Letters to Dr. Kippis, p. 79; and alſo Heylyn's Reformation juſtified. Tracts, p. 510.

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ample of foreign reformers, adding force and virulence to their private reſentments, left them on their return no charity for any eſtabliſhment which bore the moſt diſtant reſemblance to it.

Theſe men formed in proceſs of time the original claſs of avowed Diſſenters among us, and from their own form of Church-government have been [l]called Preſbyterians. During their exile they expreſſed an ardent deſire to [m]alter our Liturgy, and to reduce it to a conformity with that of the French Proteſtants; though there is no reaſon to expect that their objections to our Liturgy would have been [n]obviated by this alteration: and, ſuch was

[l] They were before called Puritans from their refuſal to ſubſcribe to our Articles &c. and their affectation of ſuperior purity. There were indeed men of this ſort among us in the days of Edw. the Sixth; but the name of Puritans was not given them before the ſixth of Elizabeth. Fuller's Church Hiſt. Cent. XVI. p. 76.

Cambden in his Life of Elizabeth ſays, they ſhowed themſelves openly in the tenth year of her reign. P. 107. 3d Ed. fol.

[m] Fuller's Church Hiſt. Cent. XVI. p. 27: and Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 392—6. Attempts of this kind were made at Frankfort; and attempts of a ſimilar nature were made alſo, about the ſame time, at other places.—See Bale's Letter from Baſil in Strype's Memor. vol. iii. p. 107.

[n] Mr. Bingham has proved, that whatever objections are urged by the Diſſenters againſt the Church of England hold alſo againſt the French Church in "the French "Church's

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the ſuperiority of our own inſtitutions, that [o] one of high character, who was well acquainted with that Liturgy, is known to have declared ſoon after, upon a view of our ſolemn ſervice and ceremonies, "that if the reformed "Churches in France had kept the ſame order, "there would have been thouſands of Proteſ-"tants more.

Not [p] long after the return of theſe exiles they proceeded to erect a new form of Church-government and conſtituted a regular Preſbytery. But how little they were diſpoſed to agree among themſelves in any form of divine worſhip, which might be ſubſtituted in the room of the eſtabliſhed Liturgy, is well aſcertained by the infinite variety of opinion found among them, when they were requeſted by

"Church's Apology for the Church of England." Works, vol. ii. fol. 726.

[o] Bancroft Biſhop of London ſays to K. James at the Conference in the firſt year of his reign, "may it pleaſe "your Majeſty to remember the ſpeech of the French "ambaſſador, Monſieur Rognée," (afterwards the famous Duke de Sully,) "upon the view of our ſolemn Service "and Ceremonies," &c. Fuller's Church Hiſt. Cent. XVII. p. 13. See alſo Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 677.

[p] This was done at Wandſworth in Surry in the year 1573. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 541. Fuller calls it the firſtborn of all Preſbyteries in England: and ſays (Cent. XVI. p. 103.), that "ſecundum uſum Wandſworth" was as much honoured by the Preſbyterians, as "ſecundum uſum Sarum" had been by the Romaniſts.

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the great [q] Stateſman of that age to draw up ſuch a Liturgy, as they could recommend and approve in all its parts.

Whether it aroſe from an irreconcilable diſagreement among themſelves concerning a Liturgy, or ſolely from their hatred of the Church of Rome, they ſoon expreſſed an averſion from our eſtabliſhment not only on account of the authority over the Church, which it gives to the [r] King as the ſupreme magiſtrate, and its [s] Epiſcopal form of government; but alſo on account of its admiſſion of [t] ſet forms of

[q] Burleigh. See Fuller's Church Hiſt. Cent. XVI. p. 178.

[r] The intention of the Preſbyterians, as Bancroft argues, was to transfer the Pope's ſupremacy to their Preſbyteries. Collier's Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 610.

Though even Knox (as K. James ſays) condeſcended to write to the Queen Regent of Scotland, as ſoon as Mary had overturned the Reformation in England, informing her that ſhe was the ſupreme head of the Church. Collier's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 682.

[s] See Camden's Life of Elizabeth, p. 420.

[t] The Preſbyterian mode of worſhip ſeems to have been taken from the alternative permitted under Knox's, or the old, Liturgy in Scotland; to which it is ſubjoined: "It "ſhall not be neceſſary for the miniſters daily to repeat "all theſe things before-mentioned; but beginning with "ſome manner of confeſſion to proceed to the ſermon: "which ended, he either uſeth the prayer for all eſtates, "or elſe prayeth as the Spirit of God ſhall move his heart, "framing the ſame according to the time and manner "which he hath entreated of." Collier's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 561.

prayer:

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prayer: they moreover expreſſed offence at the habits of the Clergy, the uſe of Church-muſic, the ſign of the Croſs [u] preſcribed in the office of baptiſm, and various other ſuch circumſtances; inſiſting that the Church of England ought to conform in all reſpects to the uſages of foreign Proteſtants, and proceeding by degrees to a rage for innovation which was ſcarcely exceeded by the wildeſt enthuſiaſm of antecedent reformers.

To guard therefore that moſt invaluable moderation, with which we were ſo peculiarly bleſſed at the commencement of our reformation, it was found neceſſary after the reſtoration of our Church under Elizabeth to [w] provide it with new barriers againſt the enthuſiaſm of innovation. This was done by alterations made in the Articles, by the Canons which were enforced during the reign of

[u] Dean Tucker inſiſts in his Letters to Dr. Kippis that the ſign of the croſs is uſed with us, after, not at, baptiſm: and ſays, that he thinks all the loud clamours of the Diſſenters againſt our ceremonies terminate in this and the act of kneeling at the Sacrament. P. 23.

[w] The ſteps, taken by Q. Elizabeth to reſtore and perfect the reformation among us, were conducted by the ſame kind of deliberation which prevailed in her brother's reign. See what Camden ſays very particularly on the ſubject—Life of Eliz. p. 31.

See alſo Burnet's Hiſt. of Ref. vol. ii. p. 376, 378, 381, 407.

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[x] Elizabeth, and by the [y] requiſition of a ſtrict conformity to the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment.

The [z] alterations, made at that time in the Articles, were not ſucceeded, like [a] thoſe made at the ſame time in the Liturgy, that other diſtinguiſhed part of our ſyſtem, by new alterations at ſubſequent periods in order to advance our eſtabliſhed forms to their preſent ſtate of excellence: but theſe Articles have thenceforward remained the ſame [b] unvaried compendium of our national Faith. As Bp. [c] Bull ſays, "they are not propoſed as eſſentials "of Religion, without which no man can be "ſaved: theſe are ſuppoſed to be contained in "the old Creeds, and therefore the old Creeds "are made parts of our Liturgy and are to "be joined in by all."—We are to conſider the Articles, as a ſummary of our Religion, [d] calculated to preſerve union and peace among all the members of our Church, and to aſcertain and regulate the belief and doctrines of

[x] Gibſon's Codex, Pref. p. 10.

[y] Camden's Life of Eliz. p. 191-2 and 288.

[z] Theſe alterations were made by learned and moderate divines. Camden's Life of Eliz. p. 16.

[a] See an account of the ſubſequent alterations of the Liturgy in Wheatly.

[b] Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. ii. p. 195.

[c] Bull's Vindication of the Church of England, 8vo. p. 217.

[d] Burnet on the Articles, fol. p. 6—8.

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thoſe among us who are intruſted with the care of public inſtruction.

As theſe Articles are the great medium, through which, under the Scriptures, our Religion is delivered down to us; it may form an uſeful part of the preſent plan, if I endeavour to repreſent in a connected manner the general ſubſtance of them: ſince ſuch a repreſentation of their contents muſt at once evince, that they in reality comprehend nothing more, than the doctrines of Scripture, expreſſed ſo as to aſcertain our own Faith, and guarded by particular declarations againſt the dangerous opinions of others.

They begin with the principal of thoſe great doctrines of our Religion, which were preſerved entire during the darker ages: they begin with [e] aſſerting not only that all things were created and are preſerved by one all-perfect God, but alſo that three Perſons are comprehended under the Unity of the divine nature. They then [f] proceed to aſſert—that the Son or ſecond Perſon is really God, being begotten of the Father by an eternal generation; —that to redeem us from our fallen condition he vouchſafed to aſſume human nature into the ſame perſon with his own;—that our Redeemer or Chriſt, being thus compounded of

[e] Art. i. [f] Art. 2.

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the divine and human nature, died for our ſins, [g] deſcended to the regions below, and afterwards [h] roſe again and aſcended into heaven, there to remain till he returns to be our judge;—that the Holy [i] Ghoſt or third Perſon, by an incomprehenſible derivation of exiſtence, different from the generation of the Son, proceeded from the two other Perſons of the Godhead and is alſo himſelf really and eternally God.

Going on to the Scriptures, that great repoſitory of our Religion which was now happily laid open again for general uſe, the Articles of our Church inſiſt on the ſufficiency of [k] Scripture to ſalvation, to the excluſion undoubtedly of all intermixture of philoſophical ſpeculation, no leſs than of all Romiſh tradition: they ſtate ſeparately the Canonical and the other books; and are careful not to diminiſh, with the Church of Rome, the authority of divine Inſpiration by extending its infallibility to the Apocryphal writings: they then affirm the [l] conſiſtency of the Old Teſtament with the New, with regard to eternal life no leſs than other doctrines; and the eternal obligation of its moral precepts.

Having adopted the ſame three [m] Creeds

[g] Art. 3. [h] Art. 4. [i] Art. 5.
[k] Art. 6. [l] Art. 7. [m] Art. 8.

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with the Romiſh Church, our Articles proceed to the great reaſon, which made a Redeemer neceſſary for us, and to the parts of our Religion which are intimately connected with it.

In mentioning the fall of Adam they ſay nothing of any guilt immediately derived to us from it: they ſay only, that, human nature being in conſequence of this fall inherently [n] corrupt and ſuch as would of itſelf merit the wrath and [o] damnation of God, the grace of God, to be derived to us through Chriſt, is neceſſary to excite in us, and to cooperate with our own [p] will in perfecting, ſuch a faith and conduct as will render us acceptable to God;—that the merits of Chriſt, and

[n] Art. 9.

[o] As the corruption, here ſpoken of, is ſaid to extend to every man born into the world; our Article only aſſerts that it merits the wrath and damnation (or condemnation) of God; and not, as it is expreſſed in the confeſſions of Auſburgh, Saxony, and Wirtemburgh, and implied in all the other Proteſtant confeſſions on the ſubject, "his "eternal damnation." See "Corpus et Syntagma Con-"feſſionum" publiſhed at Geneva in the year 1612.

Doubtleſs, it was not without very particular deſign that the word "eternal" was here omitted by our reformers: as we muſt infer alſo with regard to every ſimilar omiſſion, where a doctrine has been long canvaſſed and the force of any queſtion concerning it depends upon the part which is omitted. This obſervation applies not leſs powerfully to our 17th than to our 9th Article.

[p] Art. 10.

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not our own works, are the cauſe of this our acceptableneſs, or juſtification, with God; and Faith the [q] ſole means by which we apply theſe juſtifying merits to ourſelves; a faith however, which does not ſuperſede, but on the contrary [r] neceſſarily produces, and ſanctifies, good works

[q] Art. 11.

[r] Art. 12. The fervour, which led many of the more violent reformers to the oppoſite extreme from the Church of Rome in other doctrines, had the ſame effect with regard to juſtification. In oppoſition to what was commonly taught of the merit of works in the Romiſh Church, theſe reformers inſiſted ſo entirely on juſtification by faith alone, as to exclude any conſequent neceſſity of good works. The learned and judicious Dr. Redmayn was commanded by Cranmer to inquire into this ſubject, and to write a treatiſe upon it. In this treatiſe Dr. R. ſays, "that in thoſe Scriptures, where it is ſaid we are "juſtified by faith, we may not think we are juſtified by "faith, as it is a ſeparate virtue from hope, and charity, "fear of God, and repentance; but by it is meant faith, "neither only nor alone, but with the foreſaid virtues "coupled together, containing obedience to the whole "doctrine and religion of Chriſt. But for the definition "of faith, which ſome propoſed, as if there was a certain-"ty that one was predeſtinated, they found nothing of it "either in the Scriptures or the Doctors, and thought that "it could not be known." Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. vol. i. p. 287—8. See alſo concerning juſtification the Articles drawn up in Henry the Eighth's reign—Appendix to Strype's Memor. vol. i. p. 301: and the 4th Article concerning Juſtification, Strype's Memor. vol. iii. p. 141. See moreover the Homily on Salvation which muſt be referred to Juſtification. Indeed that the Engliſh reformers meant to repreſent the neceſſity of good works in the moſt forcible

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in us; though at the ſame time theſe good [s] works, being perfected in their principle and rendered acceptable to God through this faith only, are without it to be conſidered as eſſentially defective, or as partaking of ſin;—that works of [t] ſupererogation are arrogant conceits; ſince, even if we do all that is commanded us, we are unprofitable ſervants, and Chriſt [u] only has done what was commanded;—that our ſins, as well [w] after as before Baptiſm, are pardonable; man being at all times expoſed to ſin, and through the grace of God capable of repentance and reformation.

The Articles then ſay nothing of reprobation: they ſay concerning [x] predeſtination to

manner appears from hence, that they ſet up the Creed and the Ten Commandments in the room of the Romiſh Pixis. Dean Tucker ſays in his Letters to Dr. Kippis: "this inſtance of the Creed and Ten Commandments "being ſet up over the altar is I think peculiar to our "Engliſh Church." It was however at a very early period introduced with the Engliſh Reformation into Ireland. It is ſtated in a citation from Archbiſhop Uſher, that George Brown Archbiſhop of Dublin in the reign of Henry the Eighth, having removed all ſuperſtitious relics and images from the two Cathedrals in Dublin and from all the Churches in his Dioceſe, "cauſed the Ten Commandments, "the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, to be placed in gilded "frames about the altars." Moſh. Eccl. Hiſt. vol. iv. p. 127.

[s] Art. 13. [t] Art. 14. [u] Art. 15.
[w] Art. 16. [x] Art. 17.

life

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life—that it is the determination of certain perſons to eternal happineſs through Chriſt by a decree of God, which is kept ſecret from us, and which may reſult (conſiſtently with whatever our Church has here aſſerted) from his foreknowledge of their compliance with the conditions of the Chriſtian covenant;—that the conſideration at large of the doctrine of predeſtination, though comfortable and uſeful to ſome, may be attended with dangerous conſequences to others; and that from [y] thence the promiſes of God are to be received, as they are generally ſet forth to us in Scripture; —moreover, that we can be ſaved by no name whatever, but that of [z] Chriſt; to the excluſion of other Religions from equal powers of procuring ſalvation with the Chriſtian, and to the excluſion alſo of all corruptions of Chriſtianity by the adoration of fictitious interceſſors.

After this they declare with regard to the Church—[a] that it is the viſible communion of the faithful, among whom the word of God is

y See what is before ſaid to prove that the doctrine of the Church of England on predeſtination is contained in this concluding clauſe. See alſo Dr. Winchester's able diſſertation on the 17th Article, publiſhed at Oxford in the year 1773: in which it is very fully proved concerning the Article in general, that it was not drawn up conformably to the doctrine of Calvin.

z Art. 18. a Art. 19.

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taught and the Sacraments duly adminiſtered; and that Churches of the greateſt eminence have erred both in doctrine and diſcipline:—that the [b] power of the Church extends to rites and ceremonies, and the regulation of diſputable matters in controverſies of faith, but is not to be oppoſed to the Scriptures nor placed on a level of enacting authority with them:—that [c] general councils themſelves are compoſed of fallible members, and that theſe ought not to be aſſembled without the conſent of the civil power:—that the Romiſh Church (however authoriſed by general councils) has erred in whatever it has taught concerning [d] purgatory, indulgencies, the worſhipping of images and relics, and the invocation of Saints. Our Articles then maintain, with the injunctions of the Romaniſts, that miniſters in the Church are to be [e] lawfully appointed; but they condemn that great ſource of corruption in the darker ages, the uſe of [f] unknown languages in their miniſtration.

With regard to the Sacraments, they agree with the Church of Rome in ſome reſpects and differ from it in others: they agree with it—that the Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are not only external [g] ſigns of our Re-

[b] Art. 20. [c] Art. 21. [d] Art. 22,
[e] Art. 23. [f] Art. 24.
[g] Part of Art. 25, 27, and 28.

ligion,

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ligion, but likewiſe means of internal grace; —that the adminiſtration of theſe Sacraments by [h] unworthy miniſters does not take from their efficacy;—that [i] Baptiſm is the ſign of regeneration, admitting us to a participation of the pardon and grace which are promiſed under the Chriſtian covenant, and is to be adminiſtered to infants;—that the [k] Lord's Supper, when properly received, communicates to us the body and blood of Chriſt in a heavenly and ſpiritual manner, or, in other words, it holds forth means by which we may continually procure for our ſouls thoſe benefits of pardon and grace, which were purchaſed for us by the ſacrifice of Chriſt and to which we are admitted at firſt in Baptiſm;—and that bad men are rather to expect a [l] curſe than a bleſſing from a participation of this Holy Supper.

Our Articles differ however from the doctrines of the Romaniſts with regard to the [m] number of the Sacraments; [n] condemn their refuſal of the cup to the laity, their doctrine of [o] tranſubſtantiation, and its conſequences, the carrying about and worſhipping of the conſecrated elements, as if they were Chriſt's real body; and declare at length, in oppoſition to all the doctrines of the Romiſh Church to the

[h] Art. 26. [i] Part of Art. 27. [k] Part of Art. 28.
[l] Part of Art. 25 and 29. [m] Part of Art. 25.
[n] Art. 30. [o] Part of Art. 28.

 contrary,

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contrary, that the atonement made for us was [p] perfected by Chriſt's oblation of himſelf once offered.

After the account of the Sacraments, which cloſes the doctrinal parts of Chriſtianity in our Articles, as it cloſes alſo at preſent the religious inſtruction given us in our Church Catechiſm; we have eight Articles, independent of each other, and, in general, deſigned to ſecure us againſt poſitions of our adverſaries, whether Romaniſts or Sectaries.

Theſe contain a condemnation of the injunction of [q] celibacy on the Clergy; an aſſertion—that [r] excommunicated perſons are not to be conſidered as Chriſtians;—that [s] ceremonies, though not neceſſarily the ſame in all places, are however not to be wantonly violated, and that they are ſubject to the regulation of the particular Church by which they are appointed. They contain alſo an enumeration and adoption of our Church [t] Homilies: an aſſertion,—that our [u] ordinations and conſecrations are valid;—that the governour of the [v] ſtate is governour alſo of the Church, but that his eccleſiaſtical government is confined to the externals of Religion;—that the Biſhop of Rome has no juriſ-

[p] Art. 31. [q] Art. 32. [r] Art. 33.
[s] Art. 34. [t] Art. 35. [u] Art. 36.
[v] Art. 37.

diction

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diction in England;—that the civil power may puniſh Chriſtians with death;—and that Chriſtians may, at the command of that power, carry arms and ſerve in war. Of the two laſt of the eight independent Articles one declares that the goods of Chriſtians are not [w]common; the other that [x]oaths may be adminiſtered on lawful occaſions.

Such is the general ſubſtance of the thirty-nine Articles of our Church. That they ſhould convey to us ſo excellent a compendium of our Religion, and be ſo little calculated to give offence, even in the parts where they are immediately directed againſt our adverſaries, may appear ſurpriſing to thoſe, who conſider the offence and calumny with which they have been received.

It is obvious that they are principally intended to aſcertain and deliver down thoſe eſſential doctrines of Chriſtianity, which may be collected from the general account that I have above given of the ſubſtance of our Religion. The remaining parts of them are as obviouſly directed againſt the dangerous opinions of our different adverſaries. That, which is omitted in them on this latter head, was ſupplied in a conſiderable degree under Elizabeth by the Canons which ſhe enforced during her Govern-

[w] Art. 38. [x] Art. 39.

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ment. It has ſince been provided for more permanently by the body of [y] Canons, which were enacted in the firſt year of her ſucceſſor's reign, and which at preſent deſcribe and enforce the different parts of our eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem.

Theſe are intended to ſupply the place of the Canons and Decretals of the Romiſh Church: but, with a ſpirit eſſentially different from that of the Romiſh Communion, they profeſs to [z] originate from the civil power.

[y] Towards the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth, (after the buſineſs of the Reformation had been a long while ſuſpended,) a commiſſion was granted to thirty-two perſons to reviſe the Canons and eccleſiaſtical laws. In Edward the Sixth's time eight out of theſe thirty-two were empowered to prepare this work for the inſpection of the others. What theſe eight drew up was inſpected accordingly, and was publiſhed in Latin under the title of "Reformatio legum." What is the general ſubſtance of this work, and why it was not enforced, may be ſeen in the 2d Volume of Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. p. 195—202. See alſo on this ſubject Strype's Memor. vol. ii. p. 341 and 497, and Fuller's Church Hiſt. Cent. XVI. p. 420.

Our Canons, now in force, were made in the firſt year of James the Firſt. They are 141 in number; and many of them are the ſame with thoſe enforced by Elizabeth during her reign, Gibſon's Codex, Pref. p. 10. There were Canons afterwards drawn up by Archbiſhop Laud: but theſe were cenſured by Parliament, and therefore not enforced.

[z] Strype (in his Memor. vol. i. p. 130.) ſays that the Convocation appears to have ſubmitted to make no more Ordi-

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Though they were particularly designed for the [a] enforcement of the doctrines, Liturgy, and ceremonies of our Church; yet all, who know with what mildness and with what unlimited forbearance they have been actually applied to this purpose, must ever acknowledge that the application of them has been well suited to the toleration, [b] sanctioned in time by our civil government; and to the moderation, which so eminently distinguishes the other parts of the ecclesiastical establishment, which they are calculated to defend and complete.

Ordinances or Constitutions without the King's assent or licence in the year 1530. Collier says that the Clergy were restrained from making new Canons without the consent of the Crown in the year 1532. Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 70.

See the opinions of the two Chief Justices, which were given 8 James the First, against the power of the Clergy to make Canons without the King's licence, in Dean Wake's State of the Church and Clergy of England in their councils. Fol. p. 534.

Bp. Sherlock says the Dissenters do not give such power to the civil magistrate with regard to themselves. In this respect therefore they agree with the Romanists. Sherlock against the repeal of the Test-Act. P. 33.

[a] Those, who are disposed to complain of the coercive authority of our Church, would do well to inquire into the discipline of the primitive Christians. Of this they may see a concise account in the last chapter of Cave's Primitive Christianity.

[b] By the Toleration-Act passed in the first year of William and Mary, &c.

But,

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But, under ſuch circumſtances of univerſal toleration, we muſt not wonder if there are among us Diſſenters of very different principles from thoſe whom I have above mentioned. Wherever men enjoy an unlimited freedom of publiſhing their thoughts on religious ſubjects, there will be an endleſs variety of religious profeſſions. Not only muſt new ſects be expected continually to ariſe from the original body of Diſſenters from our Church; but alſo we muſt not wonder if the tenets of different fanatics, who have diſtracted foreign nations, ſhould be adopted by them and by others of our countrymen; nor even if Arian and Socinian doctrines ſhould every day be openly and ſucceſsfully propagated among us.

Situated alſo as our Church is, at an equal diſtance from ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, we moreover muſt not wonder, if it has from the beginning been expoſed to [c] repeated aſſaults from both theſe extremes. Immediately after its final eſtabliſhment, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, it experienced the effects of the malicious combinations and dark aſſaſſination of Romiſh ſuperſtition. In the ſucceeding reign it fell for a ſeaſon a ſacrifice

[c] "The Proteſtant Church of England has enjoyed but "little peace from its firſt eſtabliſhment." Sherlock againſt the repeal of the Teſt-Act. P. 25.

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to the mad [d] enthuſiaſm of our own Diſſenters. One reign only intervened, and that certainly not favourable to true Religion, before it again experienced the malice of the Romiſh Church. From ſuch aſſaults it would be ungratefully impious not to confeſs that the hand of Providence delivered us during our diſtreſs; and that it has alſo preſerved us unhurt, though not unalarmed, by them, during the laſt hundred years.

However alſo this reſtleſs malevolence of our enemies may have called forth particular teſts for our ſecurity, and ſtill render it neceſſary that we ſhould ſupport them, as we hitherto have done, with unſhaken reſolution; yet, amidſt all our exertions in our own defence, it has not in any degree leſſened the moderation of our Government, either civil or eccleſiaſtical, ſo as to reſtrain it from every day more widely extending its toleration to all thoſe who differ from us in religious belief.—May God grant that we may ever continue to imitate our predeceſſors both in courage and wiſdom to maintain the invaluable eſtabliſh-

[d] See, in the Preface to Hooker's Eccleſiaſtical Polity, the real origin and foundation of this enthuſiaſm, as it was deſcribed by that excellent writer at a time when he could hardly think it would ever proceed to the exceſs of madneſs, by which it was afterwards ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed.

ment,

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ment, under which our Religion has thus been delivered down to us, and in Chriſtian virtue to forgive and tolerate our moſt uncharitable opponents!

Such then are the great outlines of the hiſtory of our Religion from the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt to our own times.

Having been preached by the Apoſtles under the miraculous aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and proviſion having been made for its permanency and integrity, it appears from that time to have been left in an eminent degree to our own reaſon and our own free will. Accordingly its reception and influence in the early ages were ſuch, as we might expect from our preſent knowledge of its genuine excellence. It was offered to the free judgment of mankind; was received by the ſincere and humble; and produced ſuch viſible effects on their conduct, as to go on increaſing by the ſame gentle means, till it became the Religion of Princes, and was ſanctioned by a civil eſtabliſhment.

Being from this time often profeſſed without ſincerity and without humility, its precepts ſoon loſt their influence, and every corruption of Chriſtian piety followed, which might be expected from intereſted paſſions, from a confuſion of ſacred and profane learning, and from all thoſe peculiar circumſtances of

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of foreign invaſion, ſavage cuſtoms, and ſavage ignorance, which enſued. In ſuch times when ſuperſtition would be ſure to acquire, with accumulated force, all the influence which true Religion loſt, it could not be difficult for religious pretenſions of the moſt abſurd and blaſphemous kind to erect themſelves in the place of pure Chriſtianity.

It pleaſed God however that the power of this kind, which was erected in the See of Rome, was made to conduce to ſome good purpoſes. The Church of Rome was known to deliver down the regular profeſſion of Chriſtianity from the beginning. It maintained likewiſe without interruption the diſcriminating doctrines of our Religion with regard to the Godhead and our Redeemer: and, what was of invaluable conſequence, it delivered down to us the Scriptures; and we are aſſured that it did not corrupt them, as well from poſitive proofs of their integrity, as from the danger, to which it would have been expoſed, of having its corruptions detected by the members of a rival Communion, which was eſtabliſhed in the Eaſt under the Biſhops of Conſtantinople.

It pleaſed God alſo that one of the conſequences of the rivalſhip of theſe Communions was the encouragement of learning in eccleſiaſtical bodies; and that, notwithſtanding the unfavour-

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unfavourable ſituation of our Religion, its external enemies were not able to prevail againſt the public eſtabliſhment of it in the kingdoms of Weſtern Europe.—With theſe advantages, which were left us after all the corruption of the darker ages, we have been enabled under the revival of ſound learning, under the incitement of a foreign reformation, and under the peculiar circumſtances of our own civil government, to correct our religious errors and to eſtabliſh that ſyſtem of Chriſtianity among us, which has been the principal ſubject of the preſent diſcourſe.

We have therefore, as Chriſtians, as Proteſtants, and as members of our own national Church, abundant means to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh us a reaſon of the hope that is in us, as far as this hope is connected with the manner, in which our holy Religion has been received and conveyed through ſucceſſive periods down to our own times.

Let us however not be vain of diſtinctions in any of theſe reſpects between ourſelves and our Chriſtian brethren, who diſſent from us, or who are members of other eſtabliſhments. Let us rather direct our thoughts to the conſideration of thoſe arguments, and thoſe objections, relative to the general truth of the Religion thus delivered down to us, in which Chriſtians of all denominations are equally concerned.

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concerned. If the conviction, which ought to reſult from theſe more important conſiderations, were to produce its proper effect; we ſhould all rejoice with exceeding great joy, that the Almighty has been pleaſed to confer on mankind ſuch an invaluable bleſſing as Chriſtianity. Actuated by the ſame common belief of the great doctrines of our Religion, we ſhould charitably and chearfully bear with the various infirmities of each other; whilſt we looked forward with awful expectation to that time, when we muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of our great Redeemer, and receive our reward, under his merits, according to the uſe which we have made of thoſe particular means of knowing and acting which he has vouchſafed to afford us.

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SERMON V.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

IN the preceding diſcourſes I have ſtated in hiſtorical order the ſubſtance of our Religion, as it extends from the moſt remote circumſtance any where revealed in Scripture to the publication of the Goſpel after the aſcenſion of Chriſt; I have alſo given in them a ſketch of its hiſtory from this publication of the Goſpel to the preſent times. I am now to ſtate in a ſummary manner the arguments in general, which are adducible in proof of the truth of our Religion, and conſequently in vindication of the anſwer which may be given from thence concerning the Hope that is in us.

As mention will often be made of natural Religion, it will preclude all danger of miſ-

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conception with regard to the ſenſe in which this expreſſion is here to be underſtood, if I declare, that I mean by it the Religion which our own reaſon, aſſiſted, as it now is, and ever has been, by a certain portion of divine grace and of light indirectly reflected from Revelation, enables us to form for ourſelves, independently of information immediately and directly derived from divine authority; and that I ſhall not enter at all into the inquiry whether our reaſon could in reality have made by itſelf the diſcoveries in natural Religion commonly aſcribed to it, however capable it may be of producing arguments in ſupport of them, when previouſly diſcovered to mankind.

To proceed then to the arguments, by which the truth of our holy Religion may be proved.—So numerous and ſo various are theſe arguments, that to comprehend within a ſmall compaſs a regular compendium of the whole, or even of the more important part of them, is impoſſible. It muſt ſuffice therefore in the preſent and the following diſcourſe, (which I ſhall appropriate to this part of my ſubject,) if I attempt to ſtate compendiouſly ſuch among the more important of them, as, commencing with the being and attributes of God, are ſufficient to prove the credibility of a divine Revelation; and to ſhew that Chriſtianity

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tianity by its internal and external evidences evinces itſelf to be in reality ſuch a Revelation.

The being of God is an article of Faith, on which all Religion, both natural and revealed, immediately and neceſſarily depends. He, that comes to God, muſt believe that he is. But this fundamental article is not more neceſſary, than its proof is eaſy. The obſervation, which is made in common life, that whatever is moſt indiſpenſably wanted is always moſt eaſily acquired, obtains here in an eminent degree. The being of God is proved from every object within the extent of our obſervation; and in a manner ſo ſingularly ſatisfactory, that men of warmth and ability have not ſcrupled to affirm [a] " that it is the only thing of which we " are certain."

Every particle of matter, even by its paſſiveneſs and inactivity, proclaims ſome external cauſe of its exiſtence. And human reaſon, a principle the moſt remote of any in this

[a] Though we cannot ſtrictly admit the truth of this ſentiment, which is introduced in N°. 381 of the Spectator, and repeated in N°. 69 of the Guardian; yet we may fully and ſafely ſubſcribe to the inferences of Bp. Stillingfleet, who makes the foundation of all certainty to depend on the neceſſary exiſtence of a being abſolutely perfect. For without that, ſays he, we can never be ſure that our faculties are not ſo conſtituted as to deceive us. Orig. Sac. p. 230.

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world from matter, however arrogant and preſumptuous, dares not profeſs itſelf its own original. Beſides, every object with which we are converſant, whether material or ſpiritual, not only requires in order to its production the agency of ſome cauſe without itſelf; but, as this cauſe alſo muſt either be the effect of ſome other cauſe or be ſelf-exiſtent, we ſhall, if we purſue the argument, at length neceſſarily aſcend to a great and ſupereminent cauſe, which is the effect of nothing and is conſequently a ſelf-exiſtent being.

To ſuppoſe, in oppoſition to this, that things might be produced "ad infinitum," ſucceſſively depending on each other, is evidently to ſuppoſe them to exiſt without any original cauſe; a ſuppoſition, not leſs abſurd, than that which would require of us to admit that any individual production might exiſt without its own proper and immediate cauſe. It anſwers indeed ſome purpoſe: it removes the abſurdity to a diſtance, and renders it perhaps inviſible to the unpenetrating eye. But ſurely it is not more abſurd, as hath been often alleged, to ſuppoſe that one link of a chain may remain ſuſpended in the air without ſupport, than to contend that an infinite number of links may be thus ſuſpended without any means of ſupporting the whole.

In vain alſo hath Atheiſm urged, "that, "though

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" though the individual things around us can-
" not, the Univerſe, which is a " ſui generis"
" phenomenon, may perhaps exiſt without a
" cauſe." This ſuppoſition is very nearly allied to the former and equally abſurd with it. Doubtleſs it ought never to have been brought forward by the men who are moſt zealous to repeat it; ſince it is contrary to our univerſal [b]experience, and thus is impreſſed with that character which they themſelves are ready on all occaſions to urge as deciſive againſt Revelation.

To prove however the abſurdity both of this and the former ſuppoſition, I may remark that each of them ſets itſelf in direct oppoſition to that univerſally received maxim, " Nihil
" eſt in toto, quod non fuit prius in partibus." Beſides, each of them is precluded for this obvious reaſon, that the world could not have derived its origin from matter. The ſyſtem of things around us not only carries with it moſt evident proof that it muſt have had an original cauſe, but farther likewiſe an immaterial cauſe; for this cauſe muſt have been, what matter is not, an active and an intelligent

[b] Beſides, no probable reaſon can be aſſigned for the deviation from univerſal experience here ſuppoſed; whereas the contrary is the caſe with regard to the parts of Revelation which are oppoſed on this ground; ſince the truth of Revelation is immediately proved by it.

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principle: ſince without activity nothing can be produced; and, without intelligence alſo, nothing that carries with it marks of regular and unqueſtionable deſign.

But in fact Atheiſm, thus ſupported, depends ſolely upon its own aſſertion: and this, which is the caſe with it in the inſtances at preſent before us, is equally ſo in all [c] others.

[c] This dependance on aſſertion is evident in all thoſe trite aſſumptions in favour of Atheiſm, which are repeated in Mr. Hume's Dialogues, p. 55—70, 94, 115, 125, 130, 166, 189, 196, 215, 238, &c. It is eminently the caſe alſo with the objections advanced by him againſt miracles, and the proofs of the being and attributes of God which are drawn from thence. Theſe objections reſt for their principal ſupport upon this ſingle circumſtance, "that "ſuch miracles are contrary to experience."—See his Eſſay on Miracles.—They reſt therefore upon this aſſumption, "that God, who is the freeſt of all poſſible "agents, if he have once acted in an extraordinary man-"ner, muſt go on to act ſo; even when the reaſons for "ſuch extraordinary agency have entirely ceaſed."—Not to mention that it is not leſs contrary to our experience, that ſuch proofs, as we have of the truth of the miracles of our Religion, ſhould be delivered down to poſterity in vindication of facts which are falſe, than that the miracles themſelves ſhould have actually been performed.

Mr. Hume is ſo fond of this gratuitous reaſoning (if I may ſo call it) from our want of experience, that he not only uſes it to diſprove the truth of miracles, but alſo in his Dialogues (p. 130.) to raiſe doubts concerning the being of God; and in his eſſay on the immortality of the ſoul (p. 38.) to eſtabliſh its mortality.

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It has been juſtly [d] remarked, that "the whole "ſtrength of Atheiſm conſiſts in contradicting "the univerſal reaſon of mankind: that Athe- "iſts have no principle and can have none; "and therefore that they can never reaſon, but "only confidently deny or affirm."

At the ſame time by the original cauſe, whoſe ſelf-exiſtence and ſpiritual nature are thus evinced, I do not mean one who gave exiſtence to himſelf; that would make action antecedent to exiſtence: but one who inherently and neceſſarily "hath exiſtence in him- "ſelf;" though in a manner which it is impoſſible for us to explain or conceive. For it muſt be confeſſed, and creatures, ſo defective as ourſelves, ought not to be aſhamed of the confeſſion, that we know no more how to explain the mode under which this ſupreme Spirit exiſts, than our adverſaries can account for the exiſtence of the eternal matter, which, with infinitely greater abſurdity than they charge on us, they are themſelves forced to ſubſtitute in his place.

But however inadequately we may conceive of the great ſelf-exiſtent Spirit, or of God, as we commonly call him; this by no means evinces that we are not abſolutely certain that there is ſuch a Being. There is an immenſe

[d] See Sherlock on Providence, p. 15. 12mo. Ed. 1776.

difference

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difference between the proof of his exiſtence, and a full inveſtigation of the nature under which he exiſts. With regard to the former, the loweſt and moſt imperfect of rational creatures may abundantly ſatisfy himſelf; but the latter cannot be attained by the higheſt: no creature can ever be ſuppoſed capable of diſcovering the eſſence of a ſelf-exiſtent Creator.

That among thoſe, who have denied the exiſtence of God, ſome have confeſſedly been men of ſcience, detracts not in the ſmalleſt degree from the certainty of his exiſtence. It is an old obſervation that "[e] no aſſertion can be "ſo abſurd as not to be made by ſome philo-"ſopher." There have been philoſophers in our own age, who have endeavoured [f]at the ſame time to diſprove the exiſtence of both matter and ſpirit; and who, as far as their principles go, have diſowned the teſtimony of all their ſenſes. Beſides, it is well known, that perverſeneſs and affectation of ſingularity often make men of various deſcriptions bold enough to advance and maintain opinions which their own reaſon ſecretly diſavows.

As proofs of the being of God are deducible from the works of the creation, ſo likewiſe

[e] Nihil tam abſurde dici poteſt, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philoſophorum. Cic. de Divin. l. 2. c. 58.

[f] See Hume's Treatiſe of Human Nature, or what is ſaid of it in Beattie's Eſſay on Truth, p. 258, &c.

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are proofs of his attributes. The power and wiſdom, which are every where diſplayed in the different parts of creation, prove him to be poſſeſſed in ſuch an infinite degree of the natural perfections which are commonly aſcribed to him; and the final intention, diſcoverable in them, enables us to conclude likewiſe ſo irreſiſtibly in proof of his moral as well as his natural attributes, that we need only open our eyes and inquire into the things around us to be convinced of his infinite and univerſal perfection. Indeed mankind of [g] every country and every age appear to have been ſo fully convinced both of the exiſtence and perfection of God, that, if this conviction be not allowed to have ariſen from traditions, or impreſſions, derived from himſelf, and in either caſe deciſive in our favour; it muſt have ariſen

g "Ut porro firmiſſimum hoc afferri videtur cur deos "eſſe credamus, quod nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium "tam ſit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuit deorum opi- "nio. Multi de diis prava ſentiunt: id enim vitioſo "more effici ſolet: omnes tamen eſſe vim et naturam di- "vinam arbitrantur. Nec vero id collocutio hominum "aut conſenſus efficit: non inſtitutis opinio eſt confirmata, "non legibus. Omni autem in re conſenſio omnium gen- "tium lex naturæ putanda eſt." Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. i. c. 13.

Mr. Hume ſays in the 2d vol. of his Eſſays, p. 429: "The only point of theology in which we ſhall find a "conſent of mankind almoſt univerſal is, that there is an "inviſible intelligent power in the world."

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from the works of creation, and muſt add irreſiſtible weight to ſuch arguments as thoſe which have been above ſtated.

It is therefore unneceſſary for me to dwell longer on this part of my ſubject, and to encounter the danger of weakening or of obſcuring the plain and unanſwerable inferences in proof of the being and attributes of God, which are [h] deducible from the works of creation, by metaphyſical and diſputable reaſonings a priori. Eſpecially too, as the [i] enemies of

[h] Archbiſhop Secker's Lecture on this ſubject is well worthy of our peruſal. See Lect. 6th.

[i] Mr. Hume commences the general corollary at the concluſion of his Eſſays (vol. ii. p. 482.) with theſe words: "Though the ſtupidity of men barbarous and uninſtructed "be ſo great that they may not ſee a ſovereign author in "the more obvious works of nature, to which they are "ſo much familiarized; yet it ſcarce ſeems poſſible that "any one of good underſtanding ſhould reject the idea, "when once it is ſuggeſted to him. A purpoſe, an in"tention, a deſign is evident in every thing; and when "our comprehenſion is ſo far enlarged as to contemplate "the firſt riſe of this viſible ſyſtem, we muſt adopt with "the ſtrongeſt conviction the idea of ſome intelligent cauſe "or author." And again: (p. 484.) "What a noble pri"vilege is it of human nature to attain the knowledge of "the Supreme Being, and from the viſible works of na"ture to be enabled to infer ſo ſublime a principle as its "Supreme Creator?"

Even after Mr. Hume appears in his Dialogues on Natural Religion to have endeavoured to weaken, if not to ſubvert, our belief in the exiſtence of an infinitely perfect Creator and Governour of the univerſe by a repetition of all

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our Religion in the preſent age generally conſult their own character ſo far as to admit theſe truths and even to magnify their extraordinary and unqueſtionable certainty; thinking perhaps to acquire from thence the appearance of candour at leaſt and impartiality, if not of piety.

[k]It may not however be improper to inſiſt in this place, that the ſame arguments, which prove a priori the infinite perfection of God, prove alſo the unity of his Being: ſince all perfect Beings muſt agree in all things, and therefore muſt be one and the ſame Being.

Now that this all-perfect Creator ſhould

all the gratuitous aſſumptions of Atheiſm, his ſceptical ſpeaker profeſſes (p. 228.) "that no one has a deeper ſenſe "of Religion impreſſed upon his mind, or pays more pro- "found adoration to the divine Being as he diſcovers him- "ſelf to reaſon in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice "of nature. A purpoſe, an intention, a deſign ſtrikes "every where the moſt careleſs, the moſt ſtupid, thinker; "and no man can be ſo hardened in abſurd ſyſtems as at "all times to reject it."

[k] See Dean Hamilton's Attempt to prove the exiſtence &c. of the Supreme Being in a demonſtrative manner. P. 170, &c. Thus alſo Ariſtotle makes Zeno ſay, "If "God be the beſt of all Beings, he muſt be ONE. For if "there were two or more ſuch, he could not be the beſt "of all Beings." Περι Ζηνωνος.

At the ſame time it muſt be added, that, as we know not in what *Perſonality* conſiſts, we cannot in any reſpect infer, that ſuch unity muſt obtain with regard to all perfect *Perſons*, as well as Beings.

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form the world, which we inhabit, without ſome propoſed end, is a moſt unreaſonable and blaſphemous ſuppoſition. Every particle of matter, with which we are converſant, is found to be calculated for ſome uſeful purpoſe; and can we conceive of the whole leſs ſuitably to the perfection of its wonderful Author? Infinite power and goodneſs never exert themſelves, but under the direction of infinite wiſdom. And therefore each of theſe attributes muſt cooperate with the others in every work of Providence.

The world then, which we inhabit, muſt have been created for ſome purpoſe, as worthy of infinite wiſdom, as its formation was of infinite power and goodneſs. And if it were, what can this purpoſe be? Doubtleſs not that all the different parts of it ſhould riſe, flouriſh, decay, and periſh, in the fleeting order in which we ſee them daily paſs before our eyes. There is nothing, as far as we can perceive, in a ſucceſſive rotation of corruptible matter, capable, on its own account, of pleaſing an eternal and immutable Creator.

Nor does the moral world, as it ſtands at preſent, offer to our contemplation any thing worthy of ſo great an Author. A confuſed ſcene of intemperance, injuſtice, and irreligion, cannot pleaſe his eyes which are too pure to behold iniquity. It muſt argue a thorough ignorance

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ignorance of mankind, or very unworthy notions of the Deity, to ſuppoſe that he could poſſibly create a race of beings merely to act on a fleeting ſtage the inconſiſtent and flagitious characters which are [k] commonly diſplayed in human life, and then to vaniſh for ever. Indeed it exceeds the higheſt powers of man's wiſdom to account for the introduction and permiſſion of moral evil; much leſs can it reconcile this evil with the deſignation of an all-perfect Creator.

Beſides, whence can it ariſe that the Deity beholds oppreſſed virtue and triumphant vice, and lets them paſs at preſent unnoticed by his Omnipotence? For though it be allowed that the actions of the beſt men are ſo imperfect as not to merit any reward, yet there is an eſſential difference in the conduct of different men, which requires at the hands of an all-perfect Governour a proportionable difference in their allotment of happineſs. The ſame reaſon therefore, which aſſures us of the being and attributes of God, evinces that he muſt have created the world at firſt, and muſt now [l] preſerve

[k] Thucydides, while he fully and admirably deſcribes the iniquity and profligacy of every kind, which broke forth in the Peloponneſian war, ſays very juſtly of theſe evils: "γιγνομενα μεν και αει εσομενα ἑως αν ἡ αυτη φυσις ανθρωπων ᾖ." Duker's Edit. l. iii. c. 82. p. 217.

[l] That the Preſerver is the ſame with the Creator of the world

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it in exiſtence, for ſome other purpoſe than what appears to receive its accompliſhment in this life.

To attempt to determine by the light of nature what this purpoſe muſt be, is neither an indication of a weak nor of a preſumptuous mind. For though the original circumſtances, and therefore moſt undoubtedly the original deſign, of man's creation can never be known, except by means of ſupernatural Revelation; yet the deſign of his exiſtence, under the circumſtances in which we now ſee him, may be proved, from the [m] promiſcuous diſtribution of good and evil in this life, to be no other than to make it preparatory to ſome future ſtate of recompence. Since, however conſiſtent any contrary ſuppoſition may be with the other attributes of God, this alone will at the ſame time vindicate his infinite goodneſs and juſtice in the moral government of the world.

And if to conſecrate (as it were) this un

world is a truth of natural Religion which may ſafely be taken for granted. For, whether the preſervation of it be aſcribed to qualities, impreſſed upon it originally, or at ſubſequent times, the effect muſt ultimately be aſcribed in either caſe to the ſame great Creator; and, as he is perfect in fore-knowledge no leſs than in power, the effect muſt alſo in either caſe be itſelf preciſely the ſame.

[m] This argument conſtantly recurs in Biſhop Sherlock's admirable Sermons.

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hallowed maſs to a purpoſe worthy of its great Author, and to vindicate at the ſame time the retributive perfections of God, ſome ſtate of rewards and puniſhments muſt be deſigned hereafter for the human race; doubtleſs we may expect to be informed of an event, in which we are ſo eſſentially concerned, and of the means requiſite to convert it to our future happineſs.

To this end indeed our reaſon, in addition to what has been above ſtated, may ſuggeſt arguments drawn from the nature of the human ſoul and from various other ſources; and may urge, as proofs of the information concerning a future ſtate afforded us by ſuch arguments, the hopes of reward and the fears of puniſhment after death, which [a] every where indicate in the minds of men the ſtrongeſt perſuaſion of a future judgment. It may direct us alſo to virtue, as the only means of ſecuring our acceptance with God at that ſolemn period.

But,—if the Religion recommended by human reaſon, (or natural religion, as it hath been above explained,) can afford us no certain information with regard to the circumſtances either of our original or our future ſtate, no means to diſcover and enforce a regular code of human duty, and no aſſurance that man's

[a] See Robertſon's Hiſt. of Amer. vol. ii. p. 202. 8vo. Ed. And Park's Travels into Africa, 8vo. Ed. p. 408.

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beſt, becauſe ſtill imperfect, endeavours will at laſt be accepted by God;—if it admits not of thoſe external and divine proofs of its truth, which, though reprobated by [o] modern unbelievers when urged in favour of Chriſtianity, have [p] univerſally of old been deemed eſſential to Religion, and have ever had the moſt deciſive influence on the minds of men;—and if it is confined to the wiſe and the great;—who will think ſo unſatisfactory and partial a guide the beſt, which ought to be expected by us in that which of all others is infinitely the moſt important of our concerns?

Beſides alſo, if, over and above all that has hitherto been ſaid, or indeed that can be ſaid, of the ſame kind, we ſuppoſe that ſince reaſon was firſt given for man's direction, his underſtanding has been darkened and his will corrupted by ſome great deviation from his original uprightneſs; we ſhall at once account for the ſubſequent deficiency of natural Religion, and be juſtified in entertaining ardent, though humble, hopes, that the Deity would be pleaſed

[o] See what Mr. Hume ſays on this ſubject in his Eſſay on Miracles; and the very able reply made to him in the text and notes of Dr. White's ſeventh Bampton-Lecture Sermon: ſee alſo above note [c], p. 200.

[p] This appears from the attempts made by different Heathen legiſlators to give ſanction to their religious ſyſtems by pretended prophecies and miracles.

to

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to communicate to us from himſelf ſome [q] Revelation on this moſt important ſubject, adapted to our ignorance and infirmities.

Now, that ſuch a Revelation has actually been communicated, thoſe very Heathen nations, from which the inſufficiency of natural Religion is commonly inferred, may ſerve to prove. Almoſt [r] every one of them has at ſome time or other aſpired to the importance of having been thus highly favoured by the Deity. And though, from the number of theſe falſe pretenſions, the real Revelation may appear to loſe of its credit; yet theſe ſerve rather to prove the truth of [s] ſome one, than to prejudice the general cauſe: ſince,

[q] Mr. Hume himſelf, at the concluſion of the religious doubts diſperſed through his dialogues, makes his ſceptic declare "That the moſt natural ſentiment, which a "well diſpoſed mind will feel with regard to the firſt "cauſe, is a longing deſire and expectation that Heaven "would be pleaſed to diſſipate, at leaſt alleviate, this pro-"found ignorance by affording ſome more particular "Revelation to mankind and making diſcoveries of the "nature, attributes, and operations of the divine object of "our Faith." Dialogues on Nat. Rel. p. 263.

[r] In Valerius Maximus—capite 2do.—de ſimulata religione, among the pretenders to a divine Revelation, are mentioned Numa Pompilius, Minos, Piſiſtratus, Lycurgus, Zaleucus, &c.

[s] If the pretenſions to a divine Revelation among the Heathens are not to be aſcribed to their acquaintance with the writings of Moſes; they muſt have originated

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wherever we meet with a counterfeit, we naturally conclude that there was an original. Beſides, there is no danger of not being able to diſtinguiſh between them when compared together. For that no Revelation except the Chriſtian (of which the Jewiſh is the commencement) has the marks, requiſite to authenticate a divine commiſſion, has been often proved; and it is indeed a truth which modern unbelievers readily admit: they contend that all alike want this recommendation.

But if it can be proved, that Chriſtianity carries with it a remedy for the deficiencies above pointed out in natural Religion; if it can be proved,—Firſt, that Chriſtianity is calculated to lead mankind to future happineſs by the complete knowledge, which it conveys to them of themſelves, of their duty and its obligation, and of their attainable acceptance with God;—Secondly, that it was accompanied with external and divine atteſtations of its truth;—and Thirdly, that it is diſtinguiſhed by its univerſality;—if theſe three articles can be proved with regard to Chriſtianity, then greater aſſurances of its truth ought not to be required, ſince greater cannot be given: both the inter-

from traditions concerning the Revelations communicated to Noah and the Patriarchs. See Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, vol. i. p. 23, 24.

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nal and external evidences of our Religion will evince it to be a divine Revelation; both the moral and natural attributes of God will vouch for its truth.

To prove the firſt of theſe three articles we need only have recourſe to thoſe books, in which the doctrines of our Religion are contained. We ſhall there find ſuch information given concerning mankind, ſuch rules laid down for their direction, and ſuch proviſion made for their happineſs; as muſt abundantly ſupply all their deficiencies of knowledge in theſe important reſpects: and ſuch as their own wiſdom in its deepeſt reſearches could never ſhadow out.

Without any parade of philoſophy, without any deductions from fallible reaſoning, [t] the creation of man, his trial, diſobedience, and corruption are unfolded in the holy Scriptures with the moſt inſtructive plainneſs. In the ſame Scriptures alſo, and with the ſame unadorned excellence, the intention of his preſent exiſtence, and the general circumſtances of that ſtate in which he is to exiſt hereafter, are awfully impreſſed upon us. Such intuitive knowledge (if I may ſo call it) is diſcloſed concerning all that relates to mankind, as Omniſcience alone could poſſeſs: and ſuch unaffected

[t] See the firſt Sermon.

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ſimplicity is diſplayed in the narration, as belongs to him only who is uninfluenced by the little vanities of finite wiſdom.

Nor does any leſs manifeſtation of the ſame divine excellencies characterize, and qualify for general uſe, thoſe dictates of our Religion, which are calculated to reform the human mind by directing it properly with regard to its duty. To diſcover a few truths amidſt a variety of errors appears to have been the utmoſt proficiency of reaſon: and a ſingle wiſe ſaying, notwithſtanding a thouſand inconſiſtencies and contradictions, has been enough to conſtitute a philoſopher.

But in Chriſt Jeſus there is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning. In his inſtructions all is alike the reſult of unerring excellence. Being poſſeſſed of all the [u] treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and being himſelf the great example propoſed for the imitation of mankind, he neither drew his inſtructions from any diſputable reaſonings, nor from any oſtentatious diſplay of virtue, in others; but from his own univerſal perfection. Knowing whence thoſe things proceed which defile a man, he made not human duty to depend upon outward appearances: he prepared for it a ſolid foundation in [w] internal purity; and a reward

[u] Col. ii. 3. [w] Matt. xv. 10—20. Luke vi. 45.

eſſentially

eſſentially different from every human motive, [x] "bleſſed, ſays he, are the pure in heart, for "they ſhall ſee God;" a reward, to which enlightened reaſon muſt ever look forward, as to the higheſt perfection of created beings, but which was to be propoſed by him only who came forth from the boſom of God.

Accordingly, that internal purity, which immediately leads to the perfection of man's duty with regard to himſelf, is explicitly enjoined him and is made alſo the [y] foundation of his duty with regard to his neighbour and his God.

Our great Redeemer and Lawgiver was not content merely to regulate the actions of mankind towards each other. [z] Every ſelfiſh, arrogant, and revengeful paſſion, for which either civil policy or vicious cuſtom had procured a ſanction, was added to the Chriſtian catalogue of ſins. It is from theſe tumultuous impulſes, as experience convinces us, that all our vices and miſery ariſe. But theſe the light of nature had not penetration or courage enough openly to arraign. While therefore the cauſe remained in full force, it ought not to ſurpriſe us that the effect was not diminiſhed.

[x] Matt. v. 8. [y] Matt. xv. 18, 19. James iii. 17.
[z] Matt. v, 22, &c. 1 John iii. 15.

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In their room Chriſtianity commands us to ſubſtitute [a] univerſal love, humbleneſs, and forgiveneſs of injuries; as diſpoſitions beſt ſuited to our own infirmities, and moſt acceptable in his ſight, "who bringeth down the mighty "from their ſeat, and exalteth the humble and "meek." Such inward virtues, unknown or untaught by natural Religion, Chriſtianity lays down as the foundation of happineſs to the human ſoul; and commands us to practice them univerſally.

It commands us to learn of him, who was [b] meek and lowly in heart, and we ſhall find reſt to our ſouls. It commands us, after his great example, to extend our benevolence to all mankind; to [c] love even our enemies; to bleſs thoſe that curſe us; to do good to ſuch as hate us; and to pray for thoſe, who deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us: teaching us by a new commandment that the great cauſes of doing ill to others were to be ſupplanted by a principle of unlimited benevolence; and that all injurious diſtinctions of different countries, intereſts, and affections, were to be done away by extended and univerſal charity.

The unlearned ſon of a carpenter, as his countrymen inſultingly ſtiled him, not only at once lays a ſolid foundation for the moſt

[a] Luke vi. 27, &c. [b] Matt. xi. 29. [c] Matt. v. 44.

perfect

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perfect ſyſtem of morality; but, a Jew (ſelfiſh as the Jews were eſteemed) is the firſt to teach the philanthropiſts of the Heathen world leſſons of univerſal love. Reaſon indeed may now aſſure us, that no other principle can make men happy here, or qualify them to enjoy their own and each other's happineſs hereafter. But God is love, and the original propagation of this doctrine proceeded from him alone.

To ſpecify all the great and particular duties with regard to [d]God and his ſervice, no leſs than with regard to man, which are enjoined as effects of the purification of our hearts; the occaſions on which they are inculcated; the exactneſs with which they are proportioned to our [e]abilities; and the condeſcenſion with which they are impreſſed upon the underſtandings of the [f]poor and ignorant, would perhaps at preſent rather confound than inform the mind, and call off its attention from the wonderful ſimplicity, with which they are all made to center in a few rules of eaſy recollection and univerſal application.

Our religious duties are all ſummed up in that ſincere love of God, which originates in internal purity, diſplays itſelf towards him in

[d] John iv. 24. James iv. 8. [e] Luke xxi. 3.

[f] See the whole of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

faith

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faith and devotion, and is exerted with [g]all our heart, with all our ſoul, with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength. And with regard to our neighbour we are enjoined, by an appeal to our own inmoſt deſires, to [h]love him as ourſelves. On theſe two commands [i]hung all the law and the prophets: and on theſe the Chriſtian's duties are expreſsly made to depend.

And as the Goſpel-rules of human duty were not the reſult of any diſputable reaſonings; ſo likewiſe the obligation, by which they are enforced, is not expoſed to the vain cavils of man's wiſdom. The obſervation of them was not recommended from the fitneſs of things, that eternal ſubject of diſpute among philoſophers.—Conſiſtent with whatever can properly be conceived to conſtitute the fixed and unalterable laws of virtue and vice, they are, notwithſtanding, [k]enjoined as the com-

[g] Luke x. 27. [h] Matt. xxii. 39. [i] Matt. xxii. 40.

[k] "Thus ſaith the Lord" is the authority under which the writers of the Old Teſtament delivered their inſtructions. In the New Teſtament alſo our bleſſed Saviour either ſpeaks authoritatively in his own name, as in Matt. v. and other parts of his Sermon on the Mount, ſee Matt. vii. 29; or in the name of the Father, on the doing of whoſe will our ſalvation is explicitly made to depend: ſee John v. 43. and Matt. vii. 21.—Even Cicero ſays, "Deus ſi quidem nobis conſulebat, hoc facito, hoc ne fe-"ceris, diceret." De Divinatione, l. 2. c. 61.

mands

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mands of an all-perfect God; and are to be [l]obeyed by us for his ſake and with a view to his glory; a motive, which ſanctifies our whole conduct, and at the ſame time extends its influence to our inmoſt ſouls, bringing under the cognizance of Omniſcience thoſe ſecret thoughts, which are the ſources of all our actions, and which it is the great deſign of the Chriſtian law univerſally to purify, and direct to that Supreme Being, who is to be their firſt, their principal, and their unceaſing object.

In the mean time, whilſt the terrors of almighty and eternal vengeance are denounced in the moſt explicit language againſt obſtinate Irreligion, ſuch [m]rewards are promiſed in a future ſtate to ſincere, though imperfect, obedience, as the heart of the wiſeſt and beſt man cannot adequately conceive. And if there be any one circumſtance in Chriſtianity beyond all others, which requires our grateful admiration of the divine goodneſs, it ſhines forth in the proviſion made by this holy Religion for our future and eternal happineſs.

Human reaſon, as I have endeavoured to ſhow, may adduce irrefragable arguments in proof of the Being and Perfection of God, and of the certainty of a future ſtate: but it can afford us no ſatisfaction concerning the

[l] 1 John iii. 17. 1 Cor x. 31. [m] 1 Cor ii. 9.

means

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means by which fallen, and, notwithſtanding their beſt endeavours, ſinful creatures can be rendered ſo pleaſing in the ſight of an all-holy Judge, as to be accepted by him and made heirs of eternal life. Our ſatisfaction in this moſt important reſpect muſt be entirely derived from the Chriſtian Revelation.

Under Chriſtianity the ſame all-perfect Redeemer, who has vouchſafed to direct us in the fulleſt manner with regard to our duty, has [n]graciouſly provided, through the atonement of his blood, a counterpoiſe to all our temptations in the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a remedy for our offences in his own univerſal perfection. Through his meritorious ſufferings in our behalf we are at all times aſſured both of aſſiſtance in the performance of our duty, and of acceptance and eternal happineſs with our offended God, upon that ſincere repentance and faith which neceſſarily carry with them a reformation of life.

Our reaſon may admire; but it has no powers of its own, either to inveſtigate, or to confirm, ſuch an amazing proof of the riches of the goodneſs of God. Infidels too may ſcoff at their Redemption, and, in their own perſons, evince, how unworthy man may be of ſuch tranſcendent mercy: but the more they

[n] See the firſt Sermon.

deride

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deride this act of mercy, the more fully do they prove, that what ſo far exceeds man's reaſon could never have originated in his invention.

Of the ſame perfect kind however with this inſtance of divine mercy are all the other Scriptural repreſentations of the divine attributes. And though unbelief and the deceitfulneſs of ſin may harden men's hearts; yet they, who come to the peruſal of the holy Scriptures with the ordinary feelings of humanity, will find, among the means uſed by the inſpired writers to inſtruct and reform mankind, ſuch endearing evidence of God's goodneſs, ſuch alarming inſtances of his juſtice, and deſcriptions of him, in every reſpect ſo corroborative of the moſt perfect ideas which we can form for ourſelves of the Divine Being, and ſo tranſcendently ſuperior to them; as from a mixture of pleaſure, awe, and reverence, cannot fail to convey to the mind a moſt ſatisfactory proof of the divine origin of Chriſtianity;—and ſuch as cannot fail at the ſame time to convince every candid inquirer, that there is nothing either in the mercy or in the juſtice, diſcoverable in the Scripture-account of the atonement made for man, which does not entirely coincide with that idea of the all-perfect God, which Revelation ſo variouſly and ſo conſiſtently ſupports.

That

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That this deſcription of the internal conſtitution of our Religion is not exaggerated, the converſion of [o] unbelievers into zealous defenders of Chriſtianity from the ſole force of its internal evidences may ſerve to prove. From other unbelievers, leſs capable of conviction, and who had perhaps leſs impartially weighed the ſubject, the ſame evidences have extorted confeſſions, which reflect as much diſgrace on their own unbelief as credit on our holy Religion.

"I will confeſs" (ſays a [p] celebrated foreigner in his treatiſe on education) "that "the majeſty of the Scriptures ſtrikes me "with admiration, as the purity of the Goſ- "pel hath its influence on my heart. Peruſe "the works of the philoſophers, with all their "pomp of diction, how mean, how contempt- "ible are they, compared with the Scriptures! "Is it poſſible that a book at once ſo ſimple "and ſo ſublime ſhould be merely the work "of man?—It is more inconceivable that a "number of perſons ſhould agree together to "write ſuch a book, than that one only ſhould "furniſh the ſubject of it. The Jews were "incapable of the diction and ſtrangers to the "morality contained in the Goſpel: the proofs

[o] See Soame Jenyns's Internal Evidences.

[p] Rouſſeau in his Emilius, vol. iii. p. 136, and 139. Engl. Edit. 1767.

"of

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" of whoſe truth are ſo ſtriking and inimitable, " that the inventor would be a much more " [q]aſtoniſhing character than the hero."

What ſtronger proof can we have of the inconſiſtency of man's wiſdom, and of the impoſſibility of converting a ſelf-ſufficient philoſopher, than ſuch declarations from a profeſſed unbeliever? Who would not rather expect that a Religion, which contains within itſelf ſuch unqueſtionable evidence of its divine origin, ſhould not have any one learned adverſary, than that the author himſelf of the above declarations ſhould be of that number?

We have ſeen then, that Chriſtianity was calculated to lead mankind to future happineſs by the complete knowledge which it conveys to them of themſelves, of their duty and its obligation, and of their attainable acceptance with God. In the next Diſcourſe I ſhall proceed to the two articles, which remain of the evidences, by which I am to prove that our holy Religion is a divine Revelation.

[q] Rouſſeau here aſcribes that very character to the internal evidences of our Religion, without being convinced of its divine origin, which Hume ſays would command his faith in its miracles: " If, ſays the latter, the " falſhood of the teſtimony would be more miraculous " than the event which it relates, then, and not till then, " can it pretend to command my Faith." Eſſays, vol. ii. p. 130.

SERMON

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SERMON VI.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

I AM now to proceed to the remaining part of the evidences, by which I have undertaken to prove that Chriſtianity is a divine Revelation; and when I ſhown, Secondly, that it was accompanied with external and divine atteſtations of its truth; and, Thirdly, that it is diſtinguiſhed by its univerſality; I ſhall finiſh this head with the concluſion which naturally follows from the preceding parts of it.

The external and divine atteſtations, which may be expected in confirmation of a divine Revelation, can be no greater, perhaps no other, than prophecies and miracles. In the diſplay of theſe the attributes of Omniſcience and Omnipotence are exerted.

With regard to the prophecies, recorded in

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the Scriptures, they reſpect contingencies too wonderful for the powers of man to conjecture or to effect. Many of thoſe, which are found in the Old Teſtament, foretold unexpected changes in the diſtribution of earthly power. And whether they foretold the fall of flouriſhing cities, or the ruin of mighty empires; the [a] event has minutely correſponded with the prediction.

Nor were they delivered with that latitude of expreſſion, which characterized, and ſheltered from detection, the impoſitions of Heathen oracles. Some of them on the contrary were ſo particular, and ſo remarkably pointed to their object; that Porphyry, by a new method of aſſaulting Revelation, ſet himſelf to prove the literal accompliſhment of Daniel's prophecies; and from their circumſtantial minuteneſs boldly inferred that they muſt be the forgery of ſome [b] later age, in oppoſition to all the proofs of their antecedent exiſtence. So differently did Porphyry think of Scripture-prophecy from the modern hiſtorian, who ſarcaſtically attempts to diſcredit the evidences of our Religion by calling a pre-

[a] See Biſhop Newton on the Prophecies.

[b] See Grotius de Veritate Rel. Chriſt. l. i. c. 17. Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 9.—Prideaux's Connection, vol. i. p. 128. fol. and Lardner's Jewiſh and Chriſtian Teſtimonies, vol. iii. p. 133, &c. 4to. Edit.

diction

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diction of later times [d] "a rare prediction, be-
"cauſe the ſtyle was unambiguous and the
"date unqueſtionable."

But the great object of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament is the Redemption of mankind. This, as ſoon as Adam's fall had made it neceſſary, the mercy of God was pleaſed to foretell. And, as the time for its accompliſhment drew near, the predictions concerning it became gradually ſo clear and determinate, as to mark out with hiſtorical preciſion almoſt every [e] circumſtance in the life and character of infinitely the moſt extraordinary Perſonage that ever appeared among men.

Any one of theſe predictions is ſufficient to indicate a preſcience more than human. But the collective force of all taken together is ſuch, that nothing more can be neceſſary to prove the interpoſition of Omniſcience than the eſtabliſhment of their authenticity. And this, even at ſo remote a period as the preſent, is placed beyond all doubt. The books, in which they are contained, are known to have been tranſlated into different languages and diſperſed into different parts long before the coming of Chriſt. It is abſurd therefore to ſuppoſe that any forgery with regard to them, if at-

[d] Gibbon's Hiſtory, vol. v. p. 570.
[e] See the firſt Sermon.

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attempted by the firſt Chriſtians, ſhould not have been immediately detected; and ſtill more abſurd, if poſſible, to ſuppoſe that any paſſages thus forged ſhould afterwards have been admitted univerſally into their Scriptures by the Jews themſelves, who, from the firſt application of theſe prophecies to our bleſſed Saviour, have endeavoured by every [f] method to pervert their meaning.

Surely had the prophecies in queſtion not been found at that time in the writings to which the firſt propagators of Chriſtianity appealed; the Jews needed only produce thoſe writings to refute the impoſition. And ſince no refutation of this kind was then attempted, it was a demonſtration to the men of that age; and the ſame prophecies being univerſally found there now (without the poſſibility of accounting for it if they were forged) convey in all reaſon as forcible a demonſtration to ourſelves at preſent, that they were written there from the beginning, and unqueſtionably by no other than the finger of God.

Nor are the prophecies of the New Teſtament leſs evidently the inſpiration of Omniſcience. To ſay nothing of our bleſſed Saviour's predic-

[f] Among other methods they have even dared to mutilate and corrupt various paſſages of their own Scriptures. See Pearſon on the Creed, p. 201. 5th Edit.

tions

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tions concerning himſelf and the propagation of his Religion, nor of thoſe which relate to the future condition of the Church; the predictions, which reſpect the Jews and which are common to the New as well as to the Old Teſtament, of which ſome have long ſince been accompliſhed and others are every day receiving their accompliſhment before our eyes, abundantly prove the divine origin of all Scripture-prophecy.

The deſtruction of Jeruſalem with its unparalleled circumſtances of horror is not more clearly recorded by Joſephus, than it is foretold by Daniel and by our bleſſed Saviour. Nor did our bleſſed Saviour foretel in the moſt [g] definite language the deſtruction only of Jeruſalem, and particularly that not one [h] ſtone of the Temple ſhould be left upon another; he expreſsly foretold alſo, that "Jeruſalem ſhould be [i] trodden "down of the Gentiles, till the time of the "Gentiles be fulfilled:" while "the Jews "themſelves were to be carried away captive "into all nations;" among whom, according to the denunciation of their great Law-giver, they were to become "an [k] aſtoniſhment, a "proverb, and a bye-word."

Now that this has actually been the caſe

[g] Matt. xvi. 28. [h] Mark xiii. 2. [i] Luke xxi. 24.
[k] Deut. xxviii. 37.

with

with Jeruſalem and with the Jews, from the days of Titus and Adrian to the preſent time, every hiſtorian informs us: that it is ſo now, we ſee and know.

Nor is this all. Whatever the diſtinguiſhed affection of the Jews for their Religion and country could ſuggeſt, and whatever infidelity and hatred of Chriſtianity could help forward in their favour, was in vain tried to defeat theſe prophecies. The apoſtate Julian, an emperor qualified for the attempt in riches, power, and blaſphemous audaciouſneſs, collects this vagabond people from all countries, and leads them on by his favourite Alypius to rebuild their temple. Every human power cooperates with them, every difficulty appears to have vaniſhed. When on a ſudden the work was broken up with terror and precipitation: and an enterpriſe, ſo zealouſly undertaken and ſo powerfully ſupported, was at once deſerted.

As the influence of human means was entirely engaged in its favour; the miſcarriage of it muſt be aſcribed to ſupernatural interpoſition. What this was, we are informed by [1] contemporary and other writers, and particularly by Ammia-

[1] See in Whitby's general Preface an enumeration of the early authors who have written on this ſubject, p. 28. Sozomen, after a particular relation of the miraculous defeat of Julian's attempt, ſays of this defeat, "και τουτο "προς παντων αδεως λεγεται τε και πιστευεται, και παρ' ουδενος "αμφιβαλλεται." Hiſt. Eccl. l. v. c. 22.

Mr.

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nus Marcellinus, whoſe teſtimony, as a Pagan, a philoſopher, and a boſom-friend of the apoſtate Prince, infidelity would readily and fully [m] admit, were it not before-hand appriſed of its contents. He declares, that [n] "horrid balls of

Mr. Moyle ſays on the ſubject, "I am loth I confeſs to "reject all the miracles ſince the days of the Apoſtles for "the ſake of a very remarkable one, which happened at "the rebuilding of Jeruſalem under Julian; which is ſo "extraordinary in all its circumſtances and ſo fully atteſted "by all the Chriſtian and the Heathen hiſtorians of that "age, that I do not ſee with what forehead any man can "queſtion the truth of it." Thundering Legion, Works, vol. ii. p. 101. 8vo.

In the ſame manner, though Jortin doubts of the truth of all the other miracles, which are reported to have been performed after the commencement of the ſecond century, he ſays of this, "The ſtory of Julian's defeated attempt to "rebuild the Jewiſh temple is, after every allowance has "been made, as well atteſted as we could reaſonably ex-"pect. The teſtimony of Chriſtian writers on the ſubject "being confirmed by Marcellinus, by Jewiſh writers, and "perhaps by ſome paſſages in Julian's Epiſtles, and by this "circumſtance over and above, that it appeals to a fact "which every one might go and ſee with his own eyes." Rem. on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 380.

But Biſhop Warburton's full and learned defence of this miracle in his "Julian" is well known, and is ſufficient to ſuperſede the neceſſity of any farther vindication of it.

[m] See Warburton's Julian, p. 46, 47.

[n] Marcellinus's words on the occaſion are, "metuendi "globi flammarum, prope fundamenta crebris adſultibus "erumpentes, fecere locum exuſtis aliquoties operantibus "inacceſſum, hocque modo, elemento deſtinatius repel-"lente, ceſſavit inceptum." L. xxiii. p. 412. Edit. 1588.

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" fire, breaking out near the foundation with " frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the " place from time to time inacceſſible to the " ſcorched and blaſted workmen, and that the " victorious element continuing in this manner " obſtinately bent, as it were, to repel their " attempts, the enterpriſe was given over." To oppoſe the very ſingular evidence by which this fact is recommended to our belief, requires a more determined ſpirit of contradiction than is always to be aſcribed to infidelity. Mr. Gibbon allows, that [9] " the enterpriſe " was defeated, perhaps, by a preternatural " event."

But we cannot wonder, if the evidence on this occaſion, which muſt be reſpected even by our adverſaries, and which is allowed at times to have ſome influence with them, ſhould, notwithſtanding, not have a full and converting influence on their hearts; when we find that they are not to be converted by the powerful arguments in favour of our Religion, which ariſe from the preſent ſtate of the Jewiſh nation, and which immediately apply to their own ſenſes.

Who among our modern unbelievers has not an opportunity of ſeeing with his own eyes the wonderful completion of the Scrip-

[9] Gibbon's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 388, 389.

ture-

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ture-prophecies with regard to the Jews? Who among them may not with his own eyes ſee, in this people, a body of men, providentially preſerved to this very day in a ſtate of puniſhment and a ſtate of ſeparation from all others; religious, yet deriving no bleſſing from God; peaceable, yet ſecure of no protection among men; deſpiſed and perſecuted during ſeventeen hundred years as a nation, yet ever zealous of their national diſtinctions; abounding in riches, yet, contrary to the known influence of riches, deſtitute of a ſettled place where to enjoy them; and, as if they were expreſsly intended by the Almighty for the converſion of thoſe who will not believe except they themſelves ſee a ſign from heaven, ſcattered over every country and obvious to the ſenſes of every unbeliever?

The miracles, which are adducible in vindication of the divine origin of Chriſtianity as well from the Old as the New Teſtament, and which conſtitute its other external and divine proof, were of ſuch a nature as to preclude all poſſibility of forgery.

Every individual in the Jewiſh nation was preſent at the time when the great miracles, recorded in the Pentateuch, were performed. Every one of them muſt have ſeen the wonders performed in Egypt; have ſeen the waters of the Red Sea retire on either ſide, as on a heap,

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to afford them a paſſage; have heard the voice of God from mount Sinai; and ſenſibly have experienced the continued miracles wrought for [p] their ſuſtenance and the preſervation of their raiment during forty years in the wilderneſs. No one at that time could poſſibly deceive them in ſuch matters.

The connection, which theſe miracles had with their law, may ſerve alſo to prove that they were not thus deceived by any ſubſequent forgery. For though we ſhould for a moment ſuppoſe the whole Jewiſh nation to have been more abſurdly credulous, than ever an individual was known to be in any other; and that immediately upon the propagation of ſuch a forgery they might admit at once the truth of theſe miracles (however unſupported by traditional hiſtory;) yet ſurely they could not be ſo ſtupidly paſſive in the admiſſion of a law which was burdenſome and intolerable. Their own as well as their fathers' experience muſt have convicted the impoſtor, who firſt enjoined the fictitious code as the ancient and divine conſtitution of their nation, and with it they would undoubtedly have rejected the miracles which were inſidiouſly deſigned for its conſecration.

Beſides, the Jews are repeatedly commanded

[p] Deut. viii. 2, 3, 4.

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in their law itſelf "[q] to teach the things therein "contained to their children; to talk of them "when they ſat in their houſes, when they "walked by the way, when they lay down, "and when they roſe up; to bind them for a "ſign upon their hand; to make them as front-"lets between their eyes; to write them upon "the poſts of their houſes and upon their "gates." Theſe commands are immediately[r] calculated to preclude any impoſition of later ages; and tend in conjunction with the preceding circumſtances to demonſtrate, that neither the time, nor the manner, in which the law is ſaid to have been delivered, was of man's[s] invention.

Indeed the tranſactions, recorded in the Pentateuch, are referred to by all the ſubſequent writers among the Jews in language ſo ſimply and convincingly declarative of their divine truth; and the impreſſion, which they made on the minds of the people, was ſo forcible; that no tranſactions appear to have been ever received by any nation with ſuch univerſal and immoveable aſſent. Jeroboam and the other deſerters of the Jewiſh worſhip before the [t] Ba-

[q] Deut. vi. 7, 8, 9.

[r] See Jenkin's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, vol. i. c. 6.

[s] See Shuckford's Connection, vol. iii. p. 350—399.

[t] This captivity was not extended to all the people of the Jews for any period of more than fifty years together.

byloniſh

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byloniſh captivity, and the ſceptical Sadducees after it, dared not deny the truth of the Pentateuch.

But in reality the Jews were ſo far from being, as they were generally accounted by the Heathen world, the moſt credulous of all nations, that they appear to have been the reverſe. It cannot be matter of wonder, that men, who had debaſed their natural notions of Religion by the moſt ſuperſtitious idolatry, ſhould charge every worſhipper of the inviſible God with credulity. But if we conſult the hiſtory of the Jews, where alone we can expect to meet with their true character, we ſhall find them to have been the moſt ſtiff-necked people, and that from the beginning they always reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt.

This obſtinacy might probably be one reaſon why the miracles, calculated for the confirmation of their Religion, were performed in a manner ſo public and unexceptionable: though certainly we have at the ſame time to acknowledge another moſt gracious reaſon for the public notoriety of the miracles, recorded both in the Pentateuch and in other [u] parts of

[u] Particularly thoſe performed by Joſhua, Samuel, and Elijah; and the continued miracle exhibited by the cloud which reſted over the Mercy-Seat in the old temple. See, concerning this cloud, Prideaux's Connection, vol. i. p. 119. Fol. Edit.

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the Jewiſh Scriptures; ſince it has ſupplied all ſucceeding ages with irrefragable arguments in vindication of the divine origin of the Jewiſh Religion.

Of the ſame incontrovertible notoriety were the miracles alſo of the New Teſtament. They were not done in a corner. Every one had full liberty to pry into their genuineneſs: and yet the moſt malicious enemies of our Saviour and his Apoſtles never pretended, at the time when they are ſaid to have been performed, to diſcover any impoſition in them. Nor was the teſtimony of thoſe, who afterwards ſtood forth to vouch for their truth, leſs public or leſs unexceptionable than the miracles themſelves. Every martyr, among the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, demonſtrates their reality by his death. For what, but the known truth of theſe wonderful events, made them lay down their lives for a Religion, of which theſe were an eſſential ſupport and often the immediate cauſe of their own ſufferings?[w]

That they were competent witneſſes on the occaſion, however poor and illiterate, their ſituation with reſpect to theſe miracles and the nature of the tranſactions themſelves fully evince.

[w] See the paſſage cited from Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. in the notes, p. 44.

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Theſe miracles were all objects of ſenſe, and required no depth of learning and no ingenuity for a proper obſervation of them. Of whatever attainments or abilities the obſervers were, they muſt know whether they had heard the dumb ſpeak, had ſeen the blind reſtored to ſight, the lame walk, and the dead raiſed again to life: they muſt know whether their Lord's crucifixion, at which they were preſent, were attended with the miraculous circumſtances which they relate; and whether they were aſſured by their ſenſes that he was again [x]alive after his paſſion. We believe in theſe reſpects nothing more, than what the diſciples of Chriſt declare, "[y]they had heard, had ſeen with their "eyes, had looked on, and their hands had "handled."

Doubtleſs men, who could hear, ſee, and feel, were as good witneſſes in theſe matters of ſenſe, as the moſt learned and acute: and men, who laid down their lives in atteſtation of facts thus indubitably known to them, cannot be ſuſpected of any want of veracity on the occaſion and muſt ever with candid inquir-

[x] See in Townſon's Works a very ingenious and very ſatisfactory harmony of the accounts given in the different Evangeliſts of the circumſtances which relate to our Saviour's reſurrection.

[y] 1 John i. 1.

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ers [z] unexceptionably eſtabliſh their truth. For however it may be urged, that the truth of the Chriſtian miracles is not proved by the ſufferings of Chriſtians for their faith under future perſecutions;—the ſufferers might be deceived, and through well-meant zeal lay down their lives in defence of an error;—however this may be urged; yet it applies not in the ſmalleſt degree to the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity, who atteſt on ſuch occaſions no-

[z] The miracles of Chriſtianity appear in reality to have all thoſe requiſites, which Mr. Hume ſays are not to be diſcovered in any miracle found in hiſtory. He ſays, "there is not to be found in all hiſtory any miracle at-"teſted by a ſufficient number of men of ſuch unqueſtion-"able good ſenſe, education, and learning, as to ſecure "us againſt all deluſion in themſelves; of ſuch undoubted "integrity, as to place them beyond all ſuſpicion of any "deſign to deceive others; of ſuch credit and reputation "in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to loſe "in caſe of being detected in any falſhood; and at the "ſame time atteſting facts performed in ſuch a public "manner and in ſo celebrated a part of the world, as to "render the detection unavoidable. All which circum-"ſtances are requiſite to give us full aſſurance in the teſ-"timony of men." Eſſays, vol. ii. p. 130.

The education of St. Paul and the writings of him and of the other authors of the New Teſtament, their unimpeached characters, their unanimous ſurrender even of their lives in defence of the truth of the miracles which they relate, the notoriety of theſe miracles, and the conſpicuous ſituation of Jeruſalem and other places where they were wrought, all contribute to refute the aſſertions of this daring philoſopher.

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thing but what fell within their own abſolute and ſenſible knowledge.

But the merciful God, who has left us irrefragable proofs of the authenticity of the prophecies, which reſpect our great Redeemer, in the unbelief of the Jews, has alſo ſupplied us with arguments in ſupport of the miracles of our Religion from the different ways in which they have been oppoſed by our different adverſaries.

While the facts were too recent to be diſputed[a], Celſus, Porphyry, and Hierocles admitted their reality, but denied the divine commiſſion of the agent, and the conſequent truth of that Religion which they were wrought to eſtabliſh. In modern times when the conſequence of their admiſſion is better known, and there are few, if any, who are not convinced that ſuch credentials muſt beſpeak an ambaſſador ſent from God, (eſpecially too when the purport of the embaſſy does not [b]contradict the great truths demonſtrable by

[a] See Mr. Moyle's Letters concerning the Thundering Legion, Works, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 353.

[b] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. l. ii. c. v. p. 172.

Let it not be thought that the argument here revolves at all in a circle from internal to external evidences and vice verſa. For, as Biſhop Sherlock ſays, "Men do not "diſtinguiſh between the doctrines which we prove by "miracles, and the doctrines by which we try miracles: "for they are not the ſame doctrines. God never "wrought

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natural Religion,) unbelievers have prudently thought fit to ſhift their ground. But, unhappily for them, a denial of the Chriſtian miracles at preſent comes too late: ſince the facts of this kind, which infidelity has long ſince admitted upon earlier and better information, will for ever remain a teſtimony of the truth of Chriſtianity and of the perverſeneſs of modern unbelief.

The univerſality of our Religion, which forms a part both of its internal and external evidences, is the third and laſt article by which I propoſe to prove its divine origin.

This univerſality was before inſiſted upon, when I treated of the ſubſtance and of the internal evidences of our Religion. Whatever may be commonly underſtood by it, we certainly ought not to eſtimate it primarily from the effects which our Religion has produced on

" wrought miracles to prove the difference between good " and evil: and I ſuppoſe that if any man were aſked " how he proves temperance or chaſtity to be duties, " murder or adultery to be ſins, he would not recur to " miracles for an argument. Theſe and the like duties " are enforced by the Goſpel; but were always truths " and duties before our Saviour's coming: and we are " in poſſeſſion of them without the help of miracles or " Revelation. And theſe are the doctrines, by which we " try miracles. But the doctrines, which are to be proved " by miracles, are the revealed doctrines of Chriſtianity, " &c." Sermons, vol. i. p. 303. See alſo Atterbury's, vol. iii. Serm. 8. P. 214—216.

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mankind. Theſe, except in regions placed beyond the poſſibility of the Chriſtian's reach, have from the beginning depended eſſentially upon ourſelves. Chriſtianity from the beginning addreſſed itſelf to us, as free agents: and, what ought ever to be urged in its favour, it was ſo publiſhed as to leave us, amidſt all our prejudices from worldly wiſdom and worldly attachments of every kind, at full liberty to accept or reject it, and to obey, or not, the injunctions which it gives concerning its future propagation.

The univerſality of our Religion, conſidered as an argument in its favour, ought therefore primarily to be eſtimated from its general deſign and other circumſtances within itſelf: and if ſecondarily from its effects; from theſe however no farther, than as they are conſidered under the influence of our own free will.

Its general deſign may immediately be collected from its general ſubſtance. This (as we have [c]ſeen) evinces that Chriſtianity commenced with the creation of mankind; that it has regularly been brought down through the different ages of their hiſtory; and that, while it joins together and unites the whole human race by the moſt comprehenſive and intimate connection, it alſo accounts for and remedies

[c] In the firſt Sermon.

thoſe

thoſe univerſal evils in human exiſtence, which man's unenlightened reaſon could neither explain nor in any conſiderable degree alleviate. While mankind are deduced by Chriſtianity from the ſame common ſtock, and involved in the ſame conſequences of their firſt parent's voluntary guilt; they are taught to what cauſe they are to aſcribe the introduction of all their ſin and miſery.

They are no longer left vainly to attempt with philoſophy to reconcile their diverſified crimes and ſufferings with the original appointment of divine goodneſs. Chriſtianity from one comprehenſive cauſe traces out and explains the whole. Like the true ſyſtem of the natural world, it accounts in the moſt ſimple and intelligible manner for apparent intricacies and irregularities, which long confounded the ſubtlety and baffled all the ingenuity of conjectural philoſophy.

Having referred man's ſin and all its deſtructive conſequences to the ſame original perverſion of free will, Chriſtianity goes on to provide as comprehenſive a remedy for theſe evils. The Heathens indeed could ſee and deplore the [d] corruption of human nature: but as they knew not its [e] cauſe, ſo they were ſtill more

[d] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac. p. 509—514.
[e] Ibid. p. 476—500.

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ignorant of its proper [f]remedy. They were too conſcious of the guilt of ſin, not to be convinced of the puniſhment which it deſerved at the hands of infinite juſtice: and at the ſame time too ſenſible of its influence over the beſt men, to ſuppoſe their actions could merit reward, much leſs eternal happineſs, from an all-perfect God. They were therefore induced through fear, either to counteract their general apprehenſions and to deny a future ſtate of retribution, or to [g]adjuſt it to their own infirmities and demerits.

The idea of an all-perfect Redeemer and of univerſal ſanctification and acceptance through him, however revealed to their forefathers, yet, when corrupted by idolatry and loſt in ſuperſtition, was not to be recovered by the moſt daring effort of human conjecture. But, what man could not conceive, much leſs expect, Chriſtianity had from the beginning ordained,

[f] Porphyry is made to ſay by St. Auguſtine: "nondum "receptam unam ſectam quæ univerſalem viam animæ "contineat liberandæ." De Civit. Dei, l. x. c. 32.

[g] We may learn from Homer of what ſort the future life was which the Heathens expected. Achilles is deſcribed by him, as ſaying to Ulyſſes in the regions below,

Μη μοι θανατον γε παραυδα φαιδιμ' Οδυσσευ·
Βουλοιμην κ' απαρουρος εων θητευεμεν αλλῳ
Ανδρι παρ' ακληρῳ ᾧ μη βιοτος πολυς ειη
Η πασι νεκυεσσι καταφθιμενοισιν ανασσειν.

Odyſſ. ιϛ' l. 487.

was

was gradually preparing, and at length accomplished in the Gospel-covenant. Infinite justice and mercy, having been vindicated with regard to the commencement of man's imperfections, are reconciled in his pardon by the merits and intercession of the second Person in the Godhead. By these means eternal happiness is again offered to mankind, and the road to it is opened by an universal expiation for those imperfections of human nature which were an invincible stumbling-block to every other system of future rewards: [h] "God spared "not his own Son, but delivered him up for us "all." Such, and so comprehensive, is Christianity in its general design.

Its other internal and particular parts are not less universally calculated for the instruction and happiness of all mankind. Nothing is to be found in its precepts, adapted to one state or people, and not to all. In Christ Jesus there is no difference between Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female. He, by whom all the nations of the earth were at first separated from one family, again unites them as brethren under the same laws and into the same communion. And that no one might be debarred of access to the Religion which was thus designed for the

[h] Rom. viii. 32. See also 1 John ii. 2.

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happineſs of all, the New Teſtament was evidently calculated by its plainneſs and ſimplicity for the inſtruction of the loweſt and moſt illiterate in every age and nation: herein remarkably differing not only from the doctrines of unaſſiſted reaſon, which are not to be inveſtigated in their different relations without the learning and labour of philoſophy; but alſo from the antecedent parts of Revelation.

As theſe latter were the obſcure [i] commencement of Chriſtianity, and as they were intended particularly for the Jews, they often abound in ſublime and figurative repreſentations; which perhaps can thoroughly be underſtood by thoſe Oriental nations only, whoſe ſtudy and delight they were. But the language of the New Teſtament, like its doctrine, is univerſal. Every one is enabled without difficulty to partake of its benefits. Every one alſo is invited to partake of them: [k] "Come unto me, all ye "that labour and are heavy laden, and I will "give you reſt," was the Redeemer's affectionate addreſs to mankind. [l] "Go ye into all "the world, and preach the Goſpel to every "creature," was the commiſſion, with which he ſent forth his diſciples; a commiſſion, which

[i] "The ancient Patriarchs were the Chriſtians of the "old world." Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, vol. i. p. 22.

[k] Matt. xi. 28. [l] Mark xvi. 15.

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the exiſtence at this hour, and contents, of the New Teſtament every where prove, that they executed, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in ſuch a manner as to leave their ſucceſſors abundant means to make the Goſpel known in proceſs of time to every individual throughout the world.

I have above ſaid, that the effects, produced on mankind by Chriſtianity, will as long as we are free agents depend eſſentially upon ourſelves: and that its univerſality ought not to be eſtimated from theſe effects any farther than as they are conſidered under the influence of man's free will. But, even under this mode of conſideration, they will afford convincing proofs of the unlimitable extent of our Religion. Though Chriſtianity was ſo propoſed to mankind from the beginning, as to leave them at full liberty to accept or reject it; yet, on its firſt publication, it was immediately embraced by multitudes. In ſucceeding ages it was eſtabliſhed in the moſt civilized and moſt powerful empires. And in our own time we know, that it is the Religion of all thoſe, who are juſtly ranked among the enlightened nations of the earth.

That it is not profeſſed at preſent by more of the unenlightened inhabitants of our globe, is to be aſcribed, in the countries placed beyond our reach, to ſimilar diſpenſations of

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Providence with thoſe which withheld for ſo many ages the coming itſelf of the Redeemer: in the countries, acceſſible to us, it is to be aſcribed, not to our Religion, but to our own imperfections; to our want of Chriſtian zeal to propagate it among diſtant nations, or rather perhaps to our want of Chriſtian virtue to recommend it by our conduct to their acceptance.

It has however widely extended its ſalutary influence among thoſe who are not its actual profeſſors. It has improved the morality of both [m] Mahometans and Pagans: it has alſo improved their religious creeds; affording them inſtruction not eaſily to be limited in its diſperſion, and, we may truſt, much more beneficial in its conſequences, than that which is derived from Revelation by unbelievers in Chriſtian countries, who doubtleſs would not exceed the moſt ſubtle of Heathen philoſophers on ſubjects of natural Religion, if they had not acceſs to that Goſpel which they affect to deſpiſe.

We are indeed encouraged to look forward to a future profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſuch perhaps as our adverſaries require; when the Chriſtian Religion, which is univerſal in its deſign and conſtitution, ſhall alſo be univer-

[m] Secker's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 257.

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ſally received; "[n] when the earth ſhall be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of "the Lord as the waters cover the ſea." But whether this unlimited profeſſion of Chriſtianity is to ariſe from a ſtrenuous exertion of the means which we now poſſeſs of making converts to it, or from any new interpoſition of the Almighty, we are not informed; much leſs are we authoriſed to require, or to hope for, an immediate accompliſhment of the bleſſed event.

In the mean time however there is one effect which we are encouraged to expect from this holy Religion, and which, though it is itſelf alſo dependent on man's free will, muſt more than compenſate for any deficiency of extenſion that can poſſibly be objected at preſent to the Chriſtian Church: We are [o] encouraged humbly to expect that the atonement made for us by our great Redeemer will be as extenſive as the influence of our firſt parent's fall, and that no one among all the deſcendants of Adam will be excluded from ſome at leaſt of its benefits, but ſuch as wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the truth, and, either from the pride of human reaſon, or the luſt of ſenſual pleaſure, reject ſo great ſalvation.

In this manner does Chriſtianity carry with

[n] Hab. ii. 14.

[o] See the firſt Sermon.

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it a remedy for the deficiencies above pointed out in natural Religion:—Firſt, it is calculated to lead mankind to future happineſs by the complete knowledge, which it conveys to them, of themſelves, of their duty and its obligation, and of their attainable acceptance with God;—Secondly, it was accompanied with external and divine atteſtations of its truth;—and, Thirdly, it is diſtinguiſhed by its univerſality.

If theſe things then are certain; if natural Religion evinces that there is an all-perfect God, the Creator and Preſerver of all things; if it evinces alſo from the preſent circumſtances of our exiſtence that there will be a future ſtate of retribution; if at the ſame time this Religion is eſſentially deficient in its inſtruction, in its proofs, and, as a ſyſtem which is too difficult for the inveſtigation of common capacities, in its extent; and if under theſe circumſtances any Revelation ſhould be ſet forth, confirming what is evinced by natural Religion and remedying what is deficient in it; then we muſt either confeſs the truth of ſuch a Revelation, or ſuppoſe God himſelf to have favoured an impoſition upon mankind: eſpecially too, when we recollect that one of the deficiencies of natural Religion, remedied by the ſuppoſed Revelation, is the want of external and divine proofs. For what reaſon to

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the utmoſt extent of its abilities recommends, and ſuch proofs confirm, is unqueſtionably the voice of God ſpeaking diſtinctly to every intelligent creature.

Thus I have attempted to ſtate in a ſummary manner the arguments in general, which are adducible in proof of the truth of our Religion, and conſequently in vindication of the anſwer which may be given from thence concerning the Hope that is in us.

In juſtice however to a cauſe, which has been defended in the ableſt and fulleſt manner, I muſt repeat the obſervation with which I entered upon this part of my ſubject; "that it "is impoſſible to comprehend within a ſmall "compaſs a regular compendium of the whole, "or even of the more important part, of the "arguments by which the truth of our holy "Religion may be proved." The repetition of this obſervation cannot but be neceſſary in an age when ſuperficial vindications of our Religion are found to do as much injury to the cauſe which they defend, as the writings againſt which they are commonly levelled. Since many, even of thoſe who think their Religion worthy of ſerious attention, contenting themſelves with ſuch curſory treatiſes, are naturally led to impute their imperfections to the ſubject itſelf: and, becauſe ſome parts are paſſed over in ſilence and others very briefly handled,

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handled, they conclude at once either that nothing, or that very little, can be ſaid in their behalf.

But if men are really in earneſt and wiſh to give the arguments in favour of Chriſtianity a fair examination, let them attentively peruſe the diſcourſes delivered at Mr. Boyle's Lecture. Or if this ſhould be thought too laborious an undertaking, let them read and thoroughly digeſt what Biſhop Pearſon has written on the Creed; and they will find, eſpecially in the former caſe, ſo many reaſons aſſigned for the truth of every part of our Religion, that neither the inſinuations of its enemies, nor the injudicious zeal of its friends, will ever after be likely to ſhake their Faith.

The importance of the inquiry muſt convince every ſenſible man that his time could not be better employed. And the conſequence of it to every [r] well-diſpoſed man will be ſuch a full aſſurance of the truth of our Religion, as muſt inſpire him with that ſettled [s] peace of

[r] Swift in his Letter to a young Clergyman goes ſo far as to ſay, "There is one obſervation which I never knew "to fail, and I deſire you will examine it in the courſe of "your life, that no gentleman of a liberal education and "regular in his morals did ever profeſs himſelf a free-"thinker." Miſcell. vol. i. p. 285.

[s] Nothing can exhibit a more ſtriking contraſt to the joyful expectations, derived from pure Religion, than the miſerable conſequences of Scepticiſm. The latter are well exem-

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mind, and pleaſing confidence with regard to futurity, which alone can conſtitute the happiness of a rational being. Since, to conclude the preſent head with the words of an admired modern [t] writer, "What true Religion and "true philoſophy dictate of God, and Provi- "dence, and man, is ſo charming, ſo conſo- "nant with all the finer and nobler feelings "in human nature, that every man of taſte "who hears of it muſt wiſh it to be true: and "I never yet heard of one perſon of candour, "who wiſhed to find the evidence of the Goſ- "pel ſatisfactory, and did not find it ſo."

exemplified in the ſeries of Mr. Hume's philoſophical writings. After he has endeavoured to wreſt from us all the pleaſing confidence, which we may derive from Chriſtianity, by his Treatiſe on Human Nature, his Eſſays, and his Dialogues; he concludes his ſceptical works with a defence of ſuicide and an attempt to prove the mortality of the ſoul. After depriving his admirers of the moſt valuable conſolations of this life, he ſurely makes them but poor amends by telling them at laſt that they may cut their throats and ſafely depend upon eternal annihilation.

[t] See Beattie on Truth, p. 447. 8vo. 5th. Edit.

SERMON

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SERMON VII.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

HAVING finiſhed the parts of my deſign, which relate to the ſubſtance, hiſtory, and evidences of our Religion, it remains that I ſpeak concerning the objections which are urged in oppoſition to its truth.

This laſt topic unhappily furniſhes abundant matter for our conſideration. For as ſuperſtition and bigotry have ever attempted to preclude a diſcordancy of opinion with regard to Chriſtianity by diſcouraging inquiries into its evidences, ſo contrary prejudices have uniformly led to the oppoſite extreme; and this moſt benevolent of all inſtitutions, inſtead of ſecuring the reſpect, by providing for the welfare, of mankind, has been treated with the moſt licentious freedom. Whatever be the cauſe

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cauſe of theſe prejudices againſt our Religion, the effect of them is indiſputable. Offences in Revelation have been induſtriouſly ſought after: and the objections, in which they are urged, have been directed againſt every article that comes recommended by its authority.

To expoſe the futility of each particular among theſe objections has furniſhed the learning of ages with ample employment. According to the plan which I have laid down, I am to content myſelf, under the preſent head, with pointing out the general ſources of ſuch objections, and with ſhowing that a forcible removal of theſe offences by divine interpoſition would be inconſiſtent with the doctrines themſelves of Revelation; concluding the whole with a particular account of thoſe objections, which are advanced againſt our Religion from the pretenſions of philoſophy. Thus limited however, the preſent head, no leſs than the preceding ones, will ſuggeſt irrefragable reaſons, by which we may ſatisfy both ourſelves and others concerning the Hope that is in us.

As this head will ſupply ſufficient matter for our conſideration at two different times; I ſhall make what relates to the general ſources of objection the ſubject of our immediate conſideration, and reſerve for the next opportunity the

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the particular objections with which I am to conclude.

It hath [a] already been remarked, "that the "whole ſtrength of Atheiſm conſiſts in con- "tradicting the univerſal reaſon of mankind: "that Atheiſts have no principle and can have "none, and therefore that they can never rea- "ſon, but only confidently deny or affirm." I ſhall therefore not attempt to trace from any more immediate ſources thoſe objections againſt the being and attributes of God, which muſt all ultimately be referred either to want of due attention to the objects which ſurround us, or to a ſpirit of unſupported contradiction; and, without particular notice of them, ſhall proceed to the different objections, which are advanced againſt our Religion by men who admit both the exiſtence and infinite perfection of God.

By ſome of theſe it is thought abſurd, that Revelation, or our Religion as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures and derived from an all-perfect Author, ſhould be at all the ſubject of offence; and that emanations from the fountain of truth ſhould furniſh the moſt prejudiced ſceptic with even an appearance of error. But ſuch men would do well to conſider the imperfections of human nature, and

[a] In the fifth Sermon.

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to inquire whether all the objections againſt Revelation ought not in reality to be aſcribed to theſe imperfections, as to their proper ſources.

We know in the firſt place that the pureſt ſtream may be rendered foul by the channel through which it paſſes: and if we view man in his moſt enlightened ſtate, we ſhall have no reaſon to wonder, that inſtructions, committed to writing and conveyed in ſucceſſive ages through his hands, ſhould [b] loſe much of their original purity.

Beſides, it appears neceſſary from the imperfections of mankind, that Revelation ſhould be attended with a variety of circumſtances, which will give riſe to objections more extenſive than are drawn from mere errors in the conveyance, and which will contribute in an eminent degree to render belief in its truth a matter of faith and not of demonſtration.

For, as containing a body of written inſtructions for the information and direction of its profeſſors, at whatever time Revelation were given, its antiquity in ſubſequent ages would render many of thoſe parts, which depend

[b] However, it has happened, whether our adverſaries will allow it to have happened providentially or not, that the corruptions of the ſacred text have neither been ſo numerous, nor of ſo great importance, as might have been expected.

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upon the conſtruction of language and the cuſtoms of mankind, obſcure at leaſt and uncertain. And where the obſcurity and uncertainty of writings require at times the aſſiſtance of conjecture, it is well known that no original perfection can ſecure them againſt all the different kinds of contradiction and aſperſion.

Excluſive alſo of theſe general appendages on human imperfection, which are ſo common to all the very ancient writings, as to be allowed by men of candour to furniſh no reaſonable objection againſt any; there are numberleſs circumſtances, ariſing from the incompetency of human judgment, which will affect ſuch a ſyſtem as the holy Scriptures unfold, and bring unmerited cenſure upon it.

A narrative, which commences with the creation, which relates during the progreſs of nearly four thouſand years the moſt extraordinary occurrences of hiſtory, and which abounds with the greateſt variety of matter, will be expoſed to charges of miſrepreſentation, when it is ſubmitted to readers, incapable of being furniſhed with an abſolute and univerſal knowledge of facts. For, in a ſucceſſion of many different things, it is [c] probable

[c] Ariſtotle cites from Agatho theſe lines:

Ταχ' αν τις εικος αυτο τουτ' ειναι λεγοι
Βροτοισι πολλα τυγχανειν ουκ εικοτα.

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that ſome will happen contrary to probability.

Eſpecially too, will this be the caſe where things natural and ſupernatural are intermixed with each other. Even the latter, though referred for their origin to the immediate interpoſition of the Deity, will, notwithſtanding, leave beings of contracted and ſceptical minds peculiar occaſions of offence. Miracles, though related by eye-witneſſes, will, as facts of a ſingular kind, be [d] eminently expoſed to every doubt which can be inſinuated againſt human teſtimony. And prophecies, which mean not to deſtroy free-agency, cannot at times eſcape the moſt injurious ſuſpicions which ariſe from intentional obſcurity.

Moreover, as we are unacquainted with the eſſence of God and the general economy of

and remarks on them, "γιγνεται γαρ το παρα το εικος· ὡστε "εικος και το παρα το εικος." Rhetoric, p. 385. 8vo—Edit. Cant. 1728.

He had before cited to the ſame, or nearly the ſame, effect,—p. 351.

Ειπερ ἐςιν εν βροτοις ψευδηγορειν
Πιθανον, νομιζειν χρη γε και τουναντιον
Απις' αληθη πολλα συμβαινειν βροτοις.

[d] "Suppoſe for inſtance that the fact, which the teſti- "mony endeavours to eſtabliſh, partakes of the extraor- "dinary and the marvellous; in that caſe the evidence "reſulting from the teſtimony admits of a diminution "greater or leſs in proportion as the fact is more or leſs "unuſual." Hume's Eſſays, vol. ii. p. 127.

his

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his moral government; thoſe parts of Revelation, which ought perhaps to be thought the leaſt expoſed in themſelves to plauſible objection, will not on that account be leſs confidently aſſailed by our adverſaries. Thus the myſteriouſneſs of paſſages in a diſpenſation, which, proceeding from God, muſt ſometimes refer to the incomprehenſible eſſence of its Author, will from our inability to judge in theſe matters be conſtrued into abſurdity. And, as the reaſons of God's dealings with man are paſt our finding out; according to our different conceptions of what he ought to do, objections will be urged againſt the matter of Revelation, as either too limited or too extenſive, againſt the time and manner, in which it was firſt introduced and propagated in the world, againſt the kind of evidence by which its truth is confirmed, and againſt the means by which its propoſed happineſs is to be obtained.

So likewiſe as we are unacquainted with the eſſences of every part of creation, no leſs than of the Creator himſelf, and are ever ready to ſupply the want of knowledge by a variety of conjecture, different kinds of objections will ariſe from a compariſon of theſe different conjectures with Revelation: ſince the ſame unfavourable concluſion may be ſuggeſted againſt its truth, whether its intention in referring to

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certain parts of creation be misunderstood, or a knowledge of the parts themselves be unfathomable, by its opponents.

To the sources of objection here enumerated, and which are all immediately derived from human imperfection, we may subjoin the effects of this imperfection on the manner in which our Religion has been explained, received, and defended, by Christians themselves; and the unmerited [c] sarcasms, to which it has been exposed from the pious and interested artifice, no less than from the sensuality and ignorance of its professors.

And if at length, in addition to all these circumstances, we take into our account the active influence of those corrupt and powerful motives, which will induce many to search out

[c] The sarcasms of this kind, to which our Religion has been exposed, do not proceed from Mr. Gibbon and Voltaire only. The philosophical Mr. Hume has founded a very considerable part of his objections against miracles on the fictions concerning the Abbé Paris and others. The inferences, which he draws from fictitious miracles, and from our want of experience as to such extraordinary events, (see the notes on the fifth Sermon,) constitute almost the whole of his bold invective against the miraculous proofs of our Religion. And what he thus urges against miracles he applies without variation to prophecies also.—See his Essays, vol. ii. p. 147.

On so weak a foundation rest the writings, which are often found to unsettle the faith and destroy the peace of unguarded readers!

and

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and extend to the uttermoſt all ſuch means of diſcrediting divine Revelation; we ſhall not want ſources to which we may refer the numberleſs objections advanced againſt our Religion.

How far it would be poſſible for Omnipotence itſelf to remove all theſe occaſions of offence, and to reduce Chriſtianity to an indiſputable and permanent certainty, without a previous annihilation of all the imperfections of our nature, I am not concerned at preſent to inquire. This queſtion has been diſcuſſed, and the negative of it ingeniouſly maintained by a [f]modern writer on the origin of evil. I am here engaged to prove, that if the Deity were thus to interpoſe his almighty power, it would be inconſiſtent with the doctrines themſelves of Revelation.

But, before I proceed to this, I may obſerve, by way of general illuſtration, that the interpoſition here deſcribed would be evidently inconſiſtent even with that courſe of things, which is univerſally eſtabliſhed and approved in the natural world.

If we conſult the common appearances which ſurround us, we ſhall every where find circumſtances ſimilar to thoſe complained of in our Religion. The conſtitution of things

[f] Soame Jenyns.

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preſents to our imperfect reaſon ſo many difficulties and uncertainties, as to demonſtrate that in the natural world it is by no means the deſign of Providence to ſubmit the propriety of his diſpenſations to our judgment, or to force us into action by any more perſuaſive motives than rational probabilities.

In the common and hourly occurrences of this life we cannot foretel the certain conſequence of the moſt vigorous exertions, nor enſure the ſucceſs of the beſt principles. To have excluded therefore with the poſſibility of objection all appearance of uncertainty from Revelation, would in reality have been to form the world, as [g] ſome partial obſervers of the divine diſpenſations inſiſt it is formed, upon one plan, and the Religion for it upon another.—But ſuch an enforcement of truth would not only be inconſiſtent with the courſe of nature, as indeed hath been evinced at large by [h] Biſhop Butler; it would be inconſiſtent alſo, as I am to prove, with what we are taught by Revelation itſelf.

To prove this, nothing more will be neceſſary, than to call your attention to the infor-

[g] See Soame Jenyns's Internal Evidences.

[h] See his "Analogy of Religion natural and revealed "to the Conſtitution and Courſe of Nature." A diligent peruſal of this work can never be too earneſtly recommended to the Chriſtian philoſopher.

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mation which Chriſtianity gives us concerning itſelf and the ſubject before us. The misfortune of moſt ſincere unbelievers is, that they conſider the Chriſtian Religion in a very erroneous point of view. They conſider it merely as a covenant made at ſome particular time between God and man without reference to any former tranſactions; and from thence they proceed to ſettle the degree of certainty which they require of its truth. This however is not to conſider Chriſtianity, but a conceit of their own.

No ſyſtem was ever denied the privilege of explaining its own nature and limiting its extent: and according to that ſtandard alone, which itſelf propoſes, can it be fairly eſtimated. Chriſtianity pretends not to be a covenant between two equal parties, nor even between a Creator and his creatures ſimply; but between an all-juſt and all-merciful God and fallen degenerate man. As ſuch it [i] informs us of the cauſe of man's fall, and of the conditions required on his part to reinſtate him in God's favour. In the perverſion of free will it points out the ſource of human miſery; and, in the regulation of the ſame principle, a remedy for this miſery through the merits of an all-perfect Interceſſor.

[i] See the firſt Sermon.

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For the privilege of free will, though wrested to the corruption, was ſtill to be, according to its original deſign, the ultimate perfection of human nature. To this great foundation therefore of all rational and moral excellence every evidence, and every precept of Chriſtianity was to be accommodated.

The Saviour, who was ſent from heaven to make atonement for man, whilſt he promiſes the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit to his weakneſs, pardon to his frailties, and even remiſſion of his greateſt crimes upon that repentance and faith which carry with them a reformation of life, ſtill leaves the ſincere obedience, which was to procure all theſe bleſſings, in man's own power. And thoſe emphatical words in the laſt chapter of that book which cloſes the whole revealed will of God, "[i] he that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt "ſtill, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy "ſtill," convey the manifeſt intention of every part of Scripture with regard to thoſe who are determined to perſevere in diſobedience.

Correſpondently with this, ſuch arguments only are offered to eſtabliſh the faith of mankind as are ſufficient to convince diſpaſſionate inquirers: and, we are expreſsly informed by one of the Apoſtles, that there were [k] "ſome

[i] Rev. xxii. 11.

[k] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

"things

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" things in St. Paul's writings hard to be un-
" derſtood, which they, who are unlearned
" and unſtable, wreſt, as they do alſo the other
" Scriptures, to their own deſtruction." In the ſame manner our bleſſed Saviour is called " a [l] ſtumbling-ſtone and a rock of offence :" and, ſo far from compelling men to receive his doctrines, he himſelf explicitly [m] declares, that to thoſe, whoſe hearts were waxed groſs, whoſe ears were dull of hearing, and who had cloſed their eyes, the myſteries of the kingdom of God were repreſented in parables ; that ſeeing they might ſee and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not underſtand.

However often tempted, never did he condeſcend by any more convincing proofs of his divine miſſion, than thoſe which he had before given, to win their attention who, like the deaf adder, ſtop their ears. Indeed the infidelity of his audience often made him withdraw the means deſigned for their conviction inſtead of adding to them. Thus we are told of his own countrymen, that [n] " he did not many mighty " works among them *becauſe* of their unbe-
" lief." Or, as another Evangeliſt expreſſes it, " [o] he *could not* do any mighty work among " them" for that reaſon.

[l] Rom. ix. 33.
[m] Matt. xiii. 11—15.
[n] Matt. xiii. 58.
[o] Mark vi. 5, 6.

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Nor need we wonder at the expreſſion; ſince the whole tenour of Revelation required ſuch a promulgation of our Religion, as ſhould leave thoſe at liberty to reject it in whom the God of this world had blinded their eyes. For though divine mercy had interpoſed to rouſe mankind from the lethargic ſecurity of continued ſin, and had engaged, through the merits of a Redeemer, both to ſupply them with ſupernatural means of reſiſting the corruption of their fallen nature, and to procure acceptance for their ſincere, however imperfect, ſervices; yet is nothing more any where propoſed by their redemption. Man's ſtate at firſt was only probationary; to no better therefore can we poſſibly expect that he ſhould be advanced by the forfeiture of his innocence.

Beſides, if the fallen angels, thoſe dreadful examples of almighty vengeance, all periſhed; how would it have been conſiſtent with the ſame infinite juſtice that any other fallen creature ſhould at once be pardoned and inveſted with eternal happineſs; or, what is the ſame, that his actions ſhould be determined by fatal neceſſity, or his faith conſtrained by irreſiſtible demonſtration, to a conformity with ſuch duties or doctrines as would unavoidably lead in their conſequences to eternal happineſs? Thoſe angels indeed, as we may infer, fell each ſeparately

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rately by his own preſumption. But what elſe will they do who periſh under the Goſpel-covenant?

Had God condemned all, that were in Adam's loins, to eternal puniſhment for the ſin of their firſt parent, his mercy might perhaps have been called in queſtion with ſome appearance of reaſon. But he has more than vindicated this his moſt endearing attribute. Of his own will he has redeemed mankind from their firſt fall; and it is to himſelf alone that each man muſt impute his ſecond. To reſtore the human race even to this capacity of happineſs was not effected without the ſacrifice of an all-perfect Redeemer. To have done more for them would have required a ſacrifice of a very different kind: the ſacrifice (if it may be ſo called) of divine juſtice.

Inſtead therefore of the bleſſings of eternal life being forced upon us by the removal of objections from our Religion, it is ſingularly and awfully remarkable in what manner reſtraints are every where on the contrary withdrawn from our faith. In the natural world, he, that filleth all things with his preſence, has condeſcended for a ſeaſon to retire, as it were, from this ſcene of probation, or in the [p] Scripture language to hide himſelf; and

[p] Job xxiii. 8, 9. Iſaiah xlv. 15.

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to leave mankind to themſelves and the concluſions of their own reaſon, ſave that he every moment ſupports the profligate ſenſualiſts, who, becauſe they do not ſee and hear him, dare deny his exiſtence. And, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, the light of the glorious Goſpel is left to our own diſcovery and application; though at the ſame time it diffuſes its ſplendour around thoſe very unbelievers who are ſtudious to retort every ray of divine illumination againſt the great luminary itſelf from which it iſſues.

Nor do any of the arguments, drawn from the creation, more fully prove the infinite perfection of its Author, than this his government of the moral world, explicitly declared in Revelation, and uniformly experienced in human life. Having, through Chriſtianity, again prepared the means and propoſed the conditions of happineſs for mankind, he determined to leave the ultimate reception and operation of this Religion to that free will by which they were from the beginning to ſtand or fall. And this, once reſolved by a Being of infinite perfection, none of thoſe paſſions and reſentments, which diſturb and fruſtrate the councils of man, have ever been able to invalidate: "His [q] righteouſneſs ſtandeth like the ſtrong

[q] Pſ. xxxvi. 6.

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" mountains, and his judgments are like the " great deep."

At the ſame time, leſt unbelievers ſhould preſumptuouſly conceive, that, by deriding, they defeat alſo the councils of the great Author of Revelation, he has expreſsly foretold, in addition to all the other information which he has given us on the ſubject, not only that " it muſt [r] needs be that offences come," but alſo, that " there ſhould come in the laſt days " [s] ſcoffers walking after their own luſts:" men, who, we may preſume, were to reſemble thoſe deſcribed by the excellent [t] Hooker, and " bear the title of wiſe men, and ſcribes, " and great diſputers of this world: men, who " are nothing indeed leſs, than what in ſhew " they moſt appear; who, being addicted unto " their own wills, uſe their wit, their learning, " and all the wiſdom they have, to maintain " that which their obſtinate hearts are de- " lighted with, eſteeming in the frantic error " of their minds the greateſt madneſs in the " world to be wiſdom, and the higheſt wiſ- " dom fooliſhneſs."

The ſcoffs of unbelievers therefore, thus foretold, inſtead of defeating the councils of the great Author of Revelation, ſerve on the

[r] Matt. xviii. 7. [s] 2 Pet. iii. 3.
[t] Eccl. Pol. b. iii. c. viii. p. 75. Edit. 1666.

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contrary to diſplay the veracity of his predictions: and the long-ſuffering, with which they are permitted to perſiſt in oppoſition to the truth, proves only that the perverſeneſs of man cannot prevail to annul the merciful offers of that all-perfect Being, who has declared, [u] "I "am Jehovah, I change not; therefore, ye "ſons of Jacob are not conſumed."

Whatever then unbelievers may ſay or immoral men do; it is not conſiſtent with what our Religion declares of itſelf, nor with the requiſitions and predictions which it holds forth to its profeſſors, that any force ſhould be applied to reſtrain the principles of the one more than the practice of the other. Chriſtianity has engaged to ſave neither without his own [w] voluntary concurrence: and ſurely its truth cannot be affected by permitting, what on the refuſal of ſuch concurrence it has moſt ſolemnly denounced, the eternal deſtruction of both.

Such are the ſources from which the objections againſt our Religion are drawn; and ſo inconſiſtent with it is any forcible removal of theſe offences.

But, leſt any one ſhould imagine that the

[u] Mal. iii. 6.

[w] Eraſmus very juſtly ſays in his paraphraſe on St. Matt. xxii. 37. O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, &c. "Cui ſemel data eſt arbitrii libertas, "invitus ſervari non poteſt."

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method of reaſoning here purſued might be extended to juſtify the abſurdities of any religious ſyſtem whatever, it may (before I diſmiſs theſe general obſervations on the objections againſt our Religion) be an uſeful caution to remark at large, that I have been attempting to account for the endleſs variety of theſe objections, and not to apologize for them, as charges, which can properly be directed againſt our Religion and which are founded in truth. Chriſtians are as ready as their enemies to confeſs, that the Deity can never be ſuppoſed to reveal any thing contradictory to reaſon: and Chriſtianity needs not the aſſiſtance of ſubterfuges. However many of its parts may have been controverted; no part of it was ever proved to be falſe or irrational.

The numberleſs abſurdities not only of the beſt-fancied hypotheſis of Deiſm, but of every other pretenſion to Revelation beſides that of the Holy Scriptures; even of the pretenſions of Jews and Chriſtians themſelves, when they deſert the written word and deſcend to oral tradition; immediately diſcover a fallibility of human origin. But the difficulties, attending Chriſtianity, are of a very different kind, and prove only that it does not mean to counteract, with regard to itſelf, the natural conſequences of our imperfections; but leaves thoſe

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conſequences to form that eſſential part of our trial, which requires a [x] good diſpoſition, as previouſly neceſſary, that we may know of the doctrines of our Religion whether they be of God: and which requires, above all, a ſpirit of inveſtigation, the reverſe of that which betrays itſelf on ſubjects of ſceptical diſpute: "For [y] thus ſaith the high and lofty One, that "inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is Holy, "I dwell in the high and holy place; with "him alſo that is of a contrite and humble "ſpirit."

In conformity with theſe requiſitions, which are ſo ſtrongly enforced in the holy Scriptures as to be conſtituted ſources of predeſtination to eternal life, aſſent is enjoined without demonſtration, and the Chriſtian's faith is made an indication of a well-diſpoſed and humble mind, as well as the deduction of an unprejudiced judgment. To an affectation in our firſt parents of being wiſe, as Gods, Revelation aſcribes our preſent miſery: and from a modeſt uſe of that reaſon, which was deſigned for man, does this gracious diſpenſation encourage us to hope for a reſtoration to happineſs.

To this reaſon it appeals, commanding us to [z] ſearch the Scriptures and as [a] wiſe men to judge for ourſelves; but ſo to judge, as to

[x] John vii. 17.
[y] Iſ. lvii. 15.
[z] John v. 39.
[a] 1 Cor. x. 15.

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remember that the Chriſtian's faith muſt ever be a virtue. And as it cannot, conſiſtently with this appellation, require demonſtrative conviction, (for where then would be its pretenſion to virtue?) ſo neither can it, conformably with that reaſon, by which, as the candle of the Lord, we are to examine Revelation itſelf, be founded on abſurdities or inconſiſtencies.

As the Chriſtian's faith does not admit of demonſtration, ſo neither will it acquieſce in enthuſiaſm or ſuperſtition. It riſes ſtill more above theſe latter, than it falls ſhort of the former. It requires all the evidence which the nature of the thing itſelf ſuggeſts; but no more. It requires that a Revelation, ſent from God for the benefit of mankind, ſhould be commenſurate with all the real wants with regard to belief as well as practice, which can be alleged by well-diſpoſed and humble men, and that it ſhould throughout be conſiſtent with the glory of God. It does not require that Revelation ſhould carry with it ſuch irreſiſtible proof of its truth, as to remove every offence and ſtop the mouth of infidelity. This would deſtroy free will and render human life no longer a ſtate of probation.

What our Religion is in its ſubſtance, its hiſtory, and its evidences, we have ſeen. It hath appeared in all theſe reſpects, not only to

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be ſuch, as to confirm in the higheſt degree the deſcription here given of the faith required of us; but ſuch alſo, as will abundantly ſatisfy every expectation of the well-diſpoſed and humble inquirer, and preſerve him, under the influence of this faith, unmoved by all the attempts of infidelity.

Filled with pious gratitude for the aſſurances afforded him of the truth of his Religion, he will confeſs both the origin and the irremediable nature of the objections advanced againſt it; and will adore that infinite wiſdom which has ſo diſpenſed to mankind its gracious communications, as to enable them, by voluntary obedience here, to cooperate with their great Redeemer in ſecuring for their inheritance that perfect happineſs which is deſigned to be their everlaſting recompence hereafter.

Having ſaid thus much, according to my original propoſal, concerning the objections in general that are advanced againſt our Religion, and having moreover added a caution with regard to the manner in which I have treated of them, I ſhall proceed in the next Diſcourſe to the particular objections with which I am to conclude.

SERMON

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SERMON VIII.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

THERE are no objections, among all that are derived from the different ſources enumerated in the preceding Diſcourſe, againſt which Chriſtians of an inquiſitive mind will require that more care ſhould be taken to guard their faith and to ſupply them with reaſons in vindication of the Hope that is in them, than thoſe which are to be the ſubject of our preſent conſideration. The objections to our Religion, urged immediately in favour of ſenſual gratifications, are notoriouſly the offspring of a vicious diſpoſition, and retain few learned advocates. But thoſe, which are drawn from philoſophy, aſſume the form of rational inquiries; too often under this ſpecious appearance diſcrediting our Religion with the followers and admirers of human ſcience.

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To hold forth cautions therefore againſt the deluſiveneſs of philoſophy, is one of the moſt zealous concerns of the [a]inſpired penmen: and as nothing more powerfully diſſuades men from error than an expoſition of its real principles, I cannot perhaps more effectually cooperate with theſe cautions in the preſent Diſcourſe, than by endeavouring to point out in it particularly the origin and foundation of the objections, which are thus advanced againſt our Religion from the pretenſions of philoſophy.

It has been obſerved by a celebrated [b]critic, that there is no ſource of excellence in writing, which will not produce the contrary effect in ſuch as are forward to diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſome unuſual diſplay of genius. If this obſervation be accommodated to our preſent ſubject, we ſhall ceaſe to wonder that the ſtudy of philoſophy, which has ſupplied humble inquirers with ſo many arguments in ſupport of Revelation, ſhould recommend itſelf to men of an oppoſite character by ſuggeſting to them objections againſt its truth. And if we reflect that abſtracted reaſonings, no leſs than immediate diſcoveries in nature, form a part of philoſophy, and that both may equally be directed againſt Revelation, we ſhall moreover ceaſe

[a] Col. ii. 8. [b] Longinus, ſect. v.

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to wonder that theſe objections ſhould at length become innumerable.

Thoſe, which are drawn from abſtracted reaſonings, extend themſelves to every part of our Religion.

For as, from the variety of cauſes to which effects may be referred, or to which, through our ignorance of the eſſences of things, they appear capable at leaſt of being referred, there is no occurrence in common life which will not afford pleas for aſſigning it to ſome falſe cauſe; ſo there is no ſubject, accounted for in Revelation, which has not furniſhed arguments to prove the poſſibility of its reference to ſome other cauſe than what is ſuggeſted in the inſpired writings, and which has not at length been ſtudiouſly wreſted from its true origin by an [c] illogical deduction of the agency of that other cauſe from the exiſtence of the general effect.—Thus the creation, formation, and government of the univerſe have been aſcribed to neceſſity or chance, as it diſplays more or leſs order to ſceptical examiners.—Matter itſelf, as it exiſts under certain modes

[c] By the poſition, as it is called in hypothetical reaſoning, of the antecedent from the poſition of the conſequent. Ariſtotle mentions this, as a thing which is very natural, but very fallacious: "Οιονται γαρ ανθρωποι, ὁταν τουδι ὁντος "η γινομενου τοδι γινεται, ει το ὑστερον ἑστι, και το προτερον ειναι "η γινεσθαι· τουτο δε ἑστι ψευδος." Poet. c. 24.

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perceivable only by the ſenſes, has been referred for the ſource of this its diſputed exiſtence to mere perceptions; while theſe again have been [d] confounded with ideas.—Spirit alſo, as it partakes with the body of ſimilar imperfections in infancy, of ſimilar gradations of improvement in advancing years, and of the ſame, even ſometimes incapacitating, affections throughout life, has been denied any other exiſtence than what it has been ſaid to derive from the precarious harmony of bodily organs.—By as ſophiſtical a method of referring things to new and ſuppoſititious cauſes, the motives, from which the moſt common of men's actions proceed, have been erected into principles of neceſſity, and inveſted with the abſolute controul of the human mind.—Nor have there been wanting philoſophers to aſcribe the contradictory opinions of different ages and nations on the ſame ſubjects, and even on moral virtues, to the impoſſibility of any criterion of truth, and to a total want of moral difference in men's actions.—While others, with an equally flattering remedy for the conſciouſneſs of guilt, have boldly aſſerted, becauſe men are aſſaulted by different degrees of temptation, and endowed with different powers of reſiſtance, that therefore whatever is called virtue in mankind

[d] See Beattie's Eſſay on Truth, p. 242, &c.

proceeds

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proceeds either from circumſtances of ſituation, or from natural frame and conſtitution.

Attempts having been thus made to ſubvert the principles of Revelation, and indeed of all Religion, by aſſuming, as the real cauſes of things, thoſe, which (to indulge ſcepticiſm in its moſt [e] abſurd poſitions) are no more than the poſſible cauſes of them; it is unneceſſary to ſhow that the ſame has been the caſe alſo with regard to all the remaining and appropriate parts of Revelation.

The truth is, things, if they exiſt at all, muſt exiſt under ſome circumſtances; and while theſe circumſtances may be referred through ignorance or artifice to fictitious cauſes, the mind of man, when ambitious to ſupport the credit of human ſufficiency, will acquieſce in any extravagant fiction ſooner than accede to the doctrines of Revelation.

[e] Such as, that neceſſity and chance may be cauſes of things; that matter has no exiſtence; and that an organization of matter in the human body may produce ſpirit or mind, &c. &c. Of which poſitions the two firſt are evidently abſurd in themſelves: and with regard to the laſt, matter and mind are not only totally different things; but likewiſe it has been proved anatomically concerning the brain, from the organization of which this ſpirit or mind is ſuppoſed to proceed, that "no part of it is eſ-"ſentially neceſſary to the exiſtence of the intellectual fa-"culties." See Dr. Ferrier's argument againſt materialiſm in the Memoirs of the Mancheſter Society, vol. iv. part 1.

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To expoſe therefore the want of foundation in objections againſt Revelation, derived from ſuch an origin, it is by no means required to prove it to be impoſſible that the cauſes aſſumed in them ſhould produce the aſſigned effects. From the poſſibility no logic can ever infer the reality of ſuch a production. Beſides, proofs of the impoſſibility of it cannot be univerſally and deciſively adduced without a knowledge of the eſſences of things.

To expoſe the want of ſolid foundation in the objections before us, it is required to ſhow only that the cauſes laid down in Revelation are ſufficient to account for the appearances of things: or that, if Revelation be true, things will exiſt under thoſe very circumſtances from which new cauſes are perverſely inferred and directed to diſprove its truth:—that (with regard to the particulars above inſtanced) if an all-wiſe God did create the univerſe, it would be governed by regular laws; and that even this regularity in the operation of ſome parts of the creation would, from the interference of other as well regulated parts of it, produce at times effects which may appear to be devoid of all regularity and order:—that if matter were produced by Omnipotence for the uſe of beings endowed with ſenſe, it is reaſonable to expect that it ſhould be ſubject to their perception by means of the organs of ſenſe,

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ſenſe, and this too in proportion only as thoſe organs are employed about it:—that if the ſpirit of man were deſigned for an exiſtence, as progreſſive at leaſt in improvement as his body, its original ſtate may well be as proportionably imperfect, and its proficiency in attainments as gradual as that of his body; and that if bodily enjoyments and ſufferings be ſo many trials of the ſpirit, it will be affected by all theſe ſenſations, and, amidſt diverſities of probation, the corruptible body will in different degrees preſs down the ſoul:—that if human actions be left to the guidance of reaſon, they cannot, though abſolutely free, be a mere effect of the will, but require to proceed from ſome motives and to be directed to ſome ends:—that if mankind be endowed with freedom of thought and be reduced to a ſtate of general corruption, it may be expected not only that individuals but alſo that communities ſhould differ in their opinions of things, and that theſe differences, when widened by the contrary operation of ignorance on the one ſide and enlightened knowledge on the other, ſhould at length terminate in contradictions of the greateſt importance:—laſtly, that if men have different talents allotted to them, their trials, or meaſures of temptation, will either in kind or degree be as different; and if one deſtined conſequence and reward of virtue

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virtue in another life be an exemption from all temptation, it is conſiſtent with the analogy of things, that the ſame cauſe ſhould in ſome degree produce the ſame effect in this life, and that good men ſhould find the leaſt difficulty in controuling their paſſions.

When it has been thus ſhown that the appearances of things, or the circumſtances under which things exiſt, are accounted for and morally ſpeaking neceſſary, if the doctrines of Revelation be true, no [f]additional argument can be wanted to enſure for us a laſting triumph over the preceding and ſimilar attempts of metaphyſical ſophiſtry: ſince our Religion itſelf both requires and explains that very ſtate of things, from which objections againſt its truth are thus [g]perverſely drawn; and it is well known, that the firſt rule of philoſophizing explicitly declares, "more cauſes of "things are not to be admitted, than are both true "and ſufficient to explain their phænomena."

But ſurely we ought not to wonder, if the

[f] Bentley very pertinently aſks, "Is that a good argu-"ment backwards againſt the truth of any thing, which "a priori is plain muſt happen ſo; though that thing be "allowed to be true?" Phileleuth. Lipſ. Rem. 22.

[g] All theſe objections are of the ſame kind with that which Ariſtotle calls "λυσις φαινομενη, αλλ' ουκ αληθης αει," and proceeds to obſerve concerning it, "ου γαρ ὁτι ουκ "εικος λυει ὁ ενιςαμενος, αλλ' ὁτι ουκ αναγκαιον." Rhetor. 8vo. p. 390.

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enemies of our Religion have been able to employ the ſuppoſitions of abſtracted philoſophy to its prejudice; ſince ſuch metaphyſical ſubtleties are ſo thoroughly adverſe to divine truth, that even attempts to reconcile them have been attended (as we have [h] ſeen above) with pernicious conſequences to Chriſtianity.

In the early ages of our Religion, when the zealots of ſuch ſyſtems had nothing to oppoſe to its recent evidences, they did not come over to its ſide without bringing with them a numerous train of errors. Sooner than they would relinquiſh their former ſtudies, they forced the ſimple doctrines of Chriſtianity into a conſiſtency with all the wild reveries of both the Gnoſtic and the Platonic ſchool. The plainneſs of Revelation was fooliſhneſs to theſe lovers of diſputation: and divine truths appeared to be unworthy of reaſon, till they had been tempered with the moſt extravagant of its ſallies. Nor did men of ſcience (as they were eſteemed) betray leſs prejudice and ignorance of true Chriſtianity, than the [i] Emperours who propoſed to the ſenate to enrol Chriſt among the Roman deities.

But as I have ſhewn that the metaphyſical attempts of the enemies of our faith to intro-

[h] See the introduction to the third Sermon.

[i] Adrian and Severus Alexander. See Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 90.

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duce new cauſes of things are devoid of all ſolid foundation; and as care is at preſent abundantly taken, by means of Church eſtabliſhments, to hinder the injudicious profeſſors of our Religion from again incorporating philoſophical conceits with its doctrines; I need add no more, either for our ſatisfaction or caution, on this part of my ſubject, and may proceed to the objections againſt our Religion which are immediately drawn from diſcoveries in nature.

Theſe objections are drawn from diſcoveries of this kind, which are either general and ſyſtematical, or particular and ſeparate; and all of them originate in erroneous opinions with regard to the intention of our Religion, or with regard to the diſcoveries themſelves from which they are drawn.

Thus, in conſequence of ſuch general and ſyſtematical diſcoveries, objections are urged againſt our Religion on account of the coincidence of its language with popular opinions concerning natural appearances, and its want of ſuperior information on theſe ſubjects. For though the [k] authors of the general diſcoveries in natural ſcience, which enlighten the preſent age, have been fully convinced of their conſiſtency with Revelation; yet we frequently

[k] Newton, Boyle, &c.

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find admirers and followers of thoſe great men, in all other reſpects, forward in this to maintain a contrary opinion. They are offended, that Revelation ſhould either countenance (according to their interpretation of its intention) any erroneous ſyſtem, or omit the opportunity of proving its ſuperior wiſdom by explaining the true ſyſtem of nature.

But ſuch men have yet to learn the real intention of Revelation. By religious as oppoſed to other inſtruction, this gracious diſpenſation was to provide a remedy for the fatal conſequences of man's original tranſgreſſion. Thus calculated, it neither approves nor condemns the natural ſyſtems of its age. Having in the introduction to its own hiſtory eſtabliſhed the foundation of every rational ſyſtem of natural knowledge, having eſtabliſhed in the Deity the Creator and Preſerver of univerſal nature, it ſupports not in its ſubſequent parts any particular reaſonings of men concerning his works. It ſimply relates ſuch truths, as are connected with Religion and refer to man himſelf. It adopts not any ſyſtem of natural philoſophy.

When references muſt neceſſarily be made to philoſophical ſubjects, with whatever human ſyſtem the expreſſions may coincide, theſe references are ſo made, as plainly to ſhow that the holy Scriptures mean not to philoſophize, but to propoſe their inſtructions in terms which are

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are moſt eaſily underſtood. The language, which philoſophers have uſed in every age, is on ſuch occaſions the unaffected language of inſpiration. Philoſophers have found it expedient, with regard to natural appearances, that the [l]errors of the generality of mankind ſhould be admitted in diſcourſes deſigned for general apprehenſion: and Revelation has graciouſly been pleaſed to accommodate itſelf to the ſame expediency. Indeed any other language would have required a previous explanation and avowal of the ſyſtem from which its terms were derived. And this would not only have been inconſiſtent with the general intention of Revelation, but alſo with that indulgence which the Deity has from the beginning been pleaſed to extend to human reaſon.

Had Revelation introduced any the beſt-founded ſyſtem of modern phyſics, or had the Almighty Creator been pleaſed to diſcloſe the councils themſelves of his infinite wiſdom, what would have been the conſequence? Philoſophy would immediately have become matter of faith, and diſbelief of any part of it a [m]dangerous hereſy. How many infidels would this or that man's fanciful hypotheſis con-

[l] Philoſophers univerſally ſpeak of the riſing of the Sun, &c.

[m] See Nichol's Conference with a Theiſt, vol. i. p. 70.

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cerning the appearances of things have called forth? From the time of Ptolemy to Copernicus how many prejudices would the wiſeſt of men have entertained againſt Revelation; and how few would have believed in a ſyſtem which appeared to contradict the teſtimony of their ſenſes?

Beſides, though truth be one certain indiviſible point, even good men think they may ſafely controvert the opinions, without impeaching the virtue, of their opponents; and in ſome caſes ſcruple not to maintain their own conjectures, for no better reaſon perhaps than becauſe they are their own. But, where Revelation had interpoſed its inſtruction, this liberty could by no means be innocent; and the human mind, having no choice of opinion left, would neceſſarily loſe one of its moſt pleaſing and moſt powerful motives to exertion.

At preſent the God, who brought [m] every beaſt of the field and every fowl of the air to Adam to ſee what he would call them, has diſplayed the productions of creation before our eyes, and left us to exerciſe that reaſon upon them which he certainly endowed not in vain with any of its powers. He has commanded our faith with regard to thoſe reli-

[m] Gen. ii. 19.

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gious doctrines, which are calculated to remedy the conſequences of man's original tranſgreſſion; and which, few as they are, the ſophiſtry of metaphyſical philoſophy has throughout attempted to ſubvert. In every other reſpect he has indulged us with perfect freedom of thought. It matters nothing to our ſalvation what ſyſtems of natural ſcience we adopt, or whether we equally reject them all; provided only that we do not, with the impious Alphonſus, argue from our own preſumption againſt the wiſdom of the Creator, and blaſphemouſly imagine, that, had we been admitted to the councils of the moſt High, we could have taught him better how to exert his Almighty power.

Excluſively however of objections againſt our Religion, which are thus drawn from general ſyſtems, others are urged againſt it in conſequence of particular and ſeparate diſcoveries in nature.

The hiſtory of Revelation is ſo immediately and intimately connected with the ſtate of the world, that believers readily confeſs there is reaſon to expect a conſiſtency between them; and the enemies of Chriſtianity have in all ages been forward to avail themſelves of the opportunities, which the conciſeneſs of the Scripture-hiſtory and the infinite variety of appearances around us afford for cavil and diſputation.

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putation. But ſo well do the particular diſcoveries, which have been made in nature, correſpond with the events recorded in the Scriptures, that they have given riſe to few objections, except with regard to the time of creation and the deſcent of mankind from the ſame common parents.

Of theſe the former are founded on [n] conjectural inferences from diſcoveries relative to the matter of our globe; which might eaſily be anſwered by other conjectures on the ſame ſubjects, were it not, that ſo extenſive is our ignorance of the original ſubſtance of the earth, and of the changes which might be made in it on different occaſions, and eſpecially when all the fountains of the great deep were miraculouſly broken up at the deluge, as to hinder us from arguing with any degree of certainty upon ſuch ſubjects. Beſides, it is very poſſible alſo, that the Moſaical account of the creation ſhould be ſo [o] explained, as to

[n] Whatever inferences ſome writers may draw from volcanos concerning the age of the world, Sir William Hamilton ſays with regard to the beds of lava in the neighbourhood of mount Ætna and Veſuvius: "I do not "pretend to ſay that a juſt eſtimate can be formed of the "great age of Volcanos from this obſervation, but ſome "ſort of conjecture might be made." On Volcanos, p. 98, 99.

[o] Moſes indefinitely aſſerts, "IN THE BEGINNING "God created the heaven and the earth:" Gen. i. 1. He

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evince that it cannot be affected by any inferences whatever which our adverſaries may wiſh to draw from theſe diſcoveries.

The beſt human means of ſatisfying a rational and modeſt inquiry into the commencement of the things around us, as far as it is indiſputably and eſſentially connected with the Scripture-hiſtory, muſt ever be ſought for in the origin of arts and ſciences and the general teſtimony of heathen antiquity. And theſe

then gives an account of the formation of the earth, which may refer to a much later period; to a period ſo much later, as to admit of the intermediate creation and probation of angels, who were unqueſtionably in exiſtence before the creation of man: (Job. xxxviii. 4—7.) and of the poſſibility even of an intermediate and different formation of the earth itſelf. It is certain that the words "IN THE "BEGINNING," as they are uſed in the introduction to St. John's Goſpel, refer to a time antecedent to the production of the very firſt creatures.

And when Moſes ſays, that God made the heavenly bodies, he may be ſuppoſed to intimate only that our atmoſphere was fitted at that time to tranſmit light, ſo that thoſe bodies were then rendered viſible to inhabitants of our globe, and might be ſaid to have been made, in an inferior ſenſe of the term, or rendered capable of conveying to us the benefits which we derive from them.

Such conjectural interpretations of Scripture receive ſupport from the difference between the word ברא "he "created," which is uſed in the firſt verſe of Gen. i. and often afterwards, and עשה which is rendered "made" in the 7th, 16th, and other verſes of this chapter, and is known frequently to imply nothing more than an adaptation, or at moſt

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have been [p] proved to be ſo deciſive in favour of Revelation, that to be ignorant of ſuch ſubjects is in reality to loſe a moſt perſuaſive motive for believing in our holy Religion.

The objections againſt the common parentage of mankind, both from the difference in their perſons and local ſituations, will require ſomewhat more of our attention. Theſe are directed againſt a part of our Religion which is intimately connected with the univerſal corruption and redemption of mankind. They are however at preſent ſo retrenched in their limits as to have loſt all the irreſiſtible force which they were ſuppoſed to carry againſt Revelation.

For, with regard to the perſons of men, whatever might [q] formerly be conjectured or reported concerning nations ſpecifically diſtinguiſhed in ſhape and ſtature from the reſt of

moſt only a formation. See concerning this uſe of עשה Exod. xxviii. &c. &c.

[p] See Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac.

[q] Tacitus gives a conciſe account of ſome ancient relations concerning monſters, which were partly of the human ſpecies, and mentions in his concluding words what probably was the real origin of ſuch fables: "Ut quiſque "a longinquo revenerat, miracula narrabant, vim turbi- "num, et inauditas volucres, monſtra maris, ambiguas ho- "minum et belluarum formas: viſa, ſive ex metu credita." Annal. l. ii. c. 24.

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mankind, we are fully authoriſed by [r] late diſcoveries to contradict every ſuch inſinuation, and to apply univerſally what a celebrated modern hiſtorian ſays of the inhabitants of America: [s] "In proportion as ſcience extends and "nature is examined with a diſcerning eye, "the wonders which amuſed ages of ignorance "diſappear, the tales of credulous travellers are "forgotten, the [t] monſters which they deſcribe "have been ſearched for in vain, and thoſe "provinces, in which they pretend to have "found inhabitants of ſingular forms, are now "known to be poſſeſſed by people no wiſe "differing from the reſt of the Americans."

The various complexions therefore, by which men are diſtinguiſhed from each other, may now be ſaid to conſtitute the principal difference in their perſons. And though this variety has ever been ſuppoſed to proceed originally from climate; yet we ſhall perhaps acquieſce more readily in the opinion from the ingenious

[r] See the different voyages of Capt. Cook.

[s] Robertſon's Hiſt. of America, vol. ii. p. 76. 8vo. Edit. The ſame is alſo fully aſſerted in Dr. Smith's "Eſſay on "the cauſes of the variety of complexion and figure in the "human ſpecies," p. 93—97. Edit. 1789.

[t] The obſervations, which are here made with regard to monſters of the human ſpecies, are equally applicable to monſters of other kinds. "The iſland of Ferro was cele-"brated for a century or two on the credit of a miracu-"lous

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and forcible manner in which "it is maintained by the hiſtorian above cited.

To inveſtigate all the cauſes which have co-operated in the production of the difference of complexion, and other leſs conſiderable differences of appearance, in the human ſpecies, and to defend the neceſſary poſitions by particular arguments, would not be conſiſtent with the limits of a ſhort diſcourſe. The ſubject alſo itſelf has been well-nigh ex-

" lous tree, ſingle in its kind, enveloped in perpetual miſts, " and diſtilling water for the ample ſupply of the iſland. " But this wonder, though vouched by ſeveral voyagers " and by ſome as eye-witneſſes, vaniſhed at the approach " of ſober inquiry, nor could a ſingle native be found " hardy enough to aſſert its exiſtence." Voyage to new South Wales, 4to. 1789. p. 22.

[u] See Robertſon's Hiſtory of America, vol. ii. p. 74, &c.

What M. de Pagès alſo ſays from his own experience on this ſubject in that part of his travels round the world in the years 1767—1771, which relates to his paſſage over the great deſert, is well worthy of our attention: " The tribes, " which frequent the middle of the deſert, have locks " ſomewhat criſped, extremely fine, and approaching the " woolly hair of the Negro. My own during the ſhort " period of my travels in thoſe regions became more dry " and delicate than uſual, and receiving little nouriſhment " from a checked perſpiration ſhowed a diſpoſition to aſ- " ſume the ſame frizzled and woolly appearance; an en- " tire failure of moiſture, and the exceſſive heat of cli- " mate by which it was occaſioned, ſeem to be the prin- " cipal cauſes of thoſe ſymptoms; my blood was become " extremely dry, and my complexion differed little at " laſt from that of a Hindoo or Arab."

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hauſted by a foreign naturaliſt of modern times.

Buffon, though he was the reverſe of being a bigot in favour of the Scripture-hiſtory, aſſerts its cauſe in the fulleſt manner poſſible againſt the objection at preſent before us. This indefatigable philoſopher inquires into all the real differences [v] diſcoverable in men's perſons; and at length from a [w] number of the beſt-atteſted obſervations deduces the following memorable concluſion: [x] "From every "circumſtance may be obtained a proof that "mankind are not compoſed of ſpecies eſſen- "tially different from each other: that on "the contrary there was originally but [y] one "individual ſpecies of men, which, after being "multiplied and diffuſed over the whole ſur- "face of the earth, underwent divers changes "from the influence of climate, from the dif- "ference of food and the mode of living, from "epidemical diſorders, as alſo from the inter- "mixture varied ad infinitum of individuals

[v] The differences in the perſons of mankind, remarked by Cook and other late voyagers, do not vary from thoſe, which are ſtated and examined by Buffon.

[w] See vol. i. of Buffon's Hiſtory, tranſlated by Kenrick and Murdock, from p. 171. to p. 292.

[x] See Buffon as above, vol. i. p. 291.

[y] Ἓν ανδρων, ἑν Θεων γενος· εκ
μιας δε πνεομεν
μητρος αμφοτερῳοι. Pindar's 6th Nemean Ode, l. 1—3.

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" more or leſs reſembling each other: that " theſe alterations were at firſt leſs conſider- " able and confined to individuals: that after- " wards, from the continued action of the " above cauſes, becoming more general, more " ſenſible, and more fixed, they formed va- " rieties of the ſpecies: that theſe varieties " have been and ſtill are perpetuated from ge- " neration to generation, in the ſame manner " as certain diſorders and certain maladies paſs " from parents to their children."

Beſides, our Religion does not want advocates in the preſent times to eſpouſe its cauſe, and to repel the attacks of this ſort to which it is every day expoſed. What has been laſt objected on the ſubject before us, by philoſophers of more enterpriſe, than ſober reflection, in their endeavours to undermine Revelation, has been very lately [z]anſwered in the moſt

[z] We have a ſufficient proof of Lord Kaims's want of ſober reflection on ſuch occaſions in what Dr. Smith remarks on his inferences from the Giagas: " He thinks it " certain that the Giagas, a nation of Africa, could not have " deſcended from one origin with the reſt of mankind, " becauſe, totally unlike all others, they are void of na- " tural affection. They kill, ſays his Lordſhip, all their " own children as ſoon as they are born, and ſupply their " places with youth ſtolen from the neighbouring tribes. " If this character had been true, even his Lordſhip's zeal " for a good cauſe might have ſuffered him to reflect, that " the Giagas could not have continued a ſeparate race " longer than the firſt ſtock ſhould have lived. The ſtolen " youth

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able and ſatisfactory manner by a diſtinguiſhed American profeſſor; who appears alſo to have made excellent uſe of his local advantages for the diſcuſſion of ſuch ſubjects, and to have ſo fully confirmed, by his own [a] obſervations and reaſonings, the ſubſtance of the concluſion urged in our favour by the great foreign naturaliſt juſt cited, as to have rendered additional defences of it entirely unneceſſary.

The other objection, advanced againſt the Scripture-genealogy of mankind from the difference in their ſituations, and the ſuppoſed abſurdity of making them migrate from ſome one country to all the remote parts of the earth, is in modern times ſtill more obviouſly and inexcuſably deſtitute of ſolid foundation; ſince, what may have been done by many different ways, it is in every point of view an unwar-

" youth would reſemble their parents, and would at length " compoſe the nation. And yet the Giagas, according " to his Lordſhip, will continue to kill their children, and " to be a ſtanding monument of the falſehood of the " Scriptures! An excellent ſpecimen of the eaſy faith of " infidelity!" Dr. Smith's Eſſay, notes, p. 96.

[a] Among other objections againſt Revelation, on the ſubject before us, that which is often urged in modern times from the diſcoveries of anatomiſts concerning the three lamellæ or folds of which the ſkin conſiſts, and from the different appearance of the mucous ſubſtance which fills the cellular membrane of the intermediate fold in black and white men, is very conciſely and ably anſwered by Dr. Smith, p. 17, and 18.

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rantable preſumption to aſſert gratuitouſly was never done by any.

Different paſſages have been actually diſcovered in the preſent century from the northern [b] extremities of the old world to the great continent of the new, which evince at once the [c] extreme probability of the migration in queſtion, as far as reſpects the peopling of the principal regions of the earth. And if we attend alſo to the [d] reſemblance found to ſubſiſt between the inhabitants on the oppoſite ſides of theſe paſſages, we ſhall find this probability advanced to an indiſputable certainty. Indeed ſo fully convinced of the certainty was the

[b] From the North-Weſt of Europe and the North-Eaſt of Aſia.

[c] "By fixing the relative ſituation of Aſia and America, and diſcovering the narrow bounds of the ſtrait "which divides them, he (Cook) has thrown a blaze of "light upon this important part of the geography of the "globe, and ſolved the puzzling problem about the peo-"pling of America by tribes deſtitute of the neceſſary "means to attempt long navigations." Introd. to Cook's and King's Voyages, publiſhed by authority, 4to. p. 55.

[d] The Eſquimaux reſemble their neighbours on the North-Weſt extremity of Europe. The ſame reſemblance is found to ſubſiſt between the inhabitants of the North-Eaſt of Aſia, and both the Americans oppoſite to them, and alſo all the other Americans, except thoſe few tribes, which, together with the Eſquimaux, appear to have deſcended from the Greenlanders. Robertſon's Hiſt. of Amer. vol. ii. p. 45—49.

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naturaliſt, above cited, long before the [d]laſt and the moſt important diſcoveries on the ſubject, that he declares, he has [e]"no doubt, "independently of every theological conſi- "deration, that the origin of the Americans is "the ſame with our own."

The leſs important parts of the new world, which are disjoined from the others, and which have been repreſented by ignorance and infidelity as vaſt continents, are by the moſt recent and complete reſearches reduced to a few [f]inconſiderable iſlands: and, as far as can be collected from the imperfect accounts given of the inhabitants, it is highly probable that they were conveyed to their preſent ſettlements from [g]iſlands adjacent to the continent of Aſia; from [h]which continent all the inhabi-

[d] Thoſe of Cook and King. We find that the latter had an opportunity of ſeeing at the ſame moment the coaſts of Aſia and America. Cook's and King's Voyage, vol. iii. p. 244.

[e] Buffon (as before,) vol. i. p. 279.

[f] New Holland, though very conſiderable in its ſize, is not at all ſo in its population. It was however known in part before the other iſlands here referred to.

[g] The inhabitants of theſe iſlands are ſuppoſed to have been all derived from the Malayans. See Introd. to Cook's and King's Voyages, 4to. p. 71—73, and vol. i. p. 116 and 202.

[h] Robertſon's Hiſtory of America, vol. ii. p. 47, 8vo. Edit.

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tants of the new world (with a [i]few ſtriking exceptions to the contrary) appear to have migrated. Nor ſhall we wonder that we are unacquainted with the circumſtances of their migration; if we conſider, that this event probably happened at no great diſtance from the early period when our own anceſtors ſet out from the ſame regions to people the Weſtern world by an oppoſite route.

Beſides all the confirmation derived to our Religion from the want of ſolid foundation in the objections againſt it thus drawn from particular diſcoveries in nature, if we reflect, (as we well may while we are purſuing ſuch objections,) that the aſcertained and acknowledged condition of every nation evidently correſponds at preſent with the Scripture-hiſtory of the fall of man and of the perverſion of his nature, and that, whilſt no probable account has been given of the origin and diſperſion, none has been given even of the corruption of mankind, except by Revelation; if we thus reflect, we ſhall find that modern diſcoveries have not only extenſively contributed

[i] The Eſquimaux, and ſome few other Americans, who appear to have migrated from the North-Weſt extremity of Europe, are to be excepted. Robertſon's Hiſt. (as above) p. 47, 48. See, concerning theſe other Americans on the Weſtern coaſt of North-America who reſemble the Eſquimaux and Greenlanders, Cook's and King's Voyage, vol. ii. p. 521, 522.

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to obviate philoſophical objections againſt our Religion, but alſo that they have furniſhed us with additional and poſitive arguments in its favour.

And ſince it is our national glory to have explored in the preſent age the whole ſurface of the globe, we may henceforth bid defiance to conjecture, and confidently aſſert from the teſtimony of eye-witneſſes, that all the different people of the earth, whereſoever found and howſoever circumſtanced, unite to prove the truth of the Scripture-hiſtory.

Such, particularly, are the origin and foundation of the objections advanced againſt our Religion from the pretenſions of philoſophy; from abſtracted reaſonings, no leſs than from immediate diſcoveries in nature. The former appear to derive their exiſtence and ſupport from that ignorance of the eſſential conſtitution of things, which muſt ever render us liable to be deceived by references of them to metaphyſical and ſuppoſititious cauſes: the latter appear to depend upon miſconceptions with regard to the intention of our Religion, or upon erroneous opinions with regard to the diſcoveries themſelves from which they are drawn.—So ſatisfactory therefore are the reaſons, which we have to advance on this part of our ſubject in vindication of the Hope that is in us!

What

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What then are we to think of the men, who propoſe [k] ſuch objections, as grounds for an univerſal rejection of Chriſtianity; who profeſs to diſbelieve all the plaineſt truths of Revelation, and fully to approve the moſt adventurous ſuggeſtions of human philoſophy? If the affectation of ſuperior wiſdom, or the luſt of ſenſual pleaſure, make them diſſemble their real ſentiments, we need not doubtleſs inſiſt upon the extreme folly of ſacrificing to ſuch motives the glorious proſpects of Chriſtianity. But, if they are ſincere in their profeſſions, we have to lament that God has given them up to [l] believe a lie, and that the Almighty has made fooliſhneſs the wiſdom of this world. It is not however for us to judge concerning others, but to beware leſt we alſo be ſpoiled through philoſophy. And, whilſt we defend the infallible word of Revelation againſt different aſſaults of the cunning craftineſs of men, let us be careful to remember, what can never be too often inſiſted upon, "[m] that God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth "grace to the humble."

[k] "Paradoxical writers have flattered themſelves that "infidelity would gain ground as philoſophy advanced. "So ſanguine was a late projector in this way, that he "would ſometimes give it as his opinion, that Chriſti-"anity could not outlaſt the preſent century." Beattie's Evidences, vol. ii. p. 152, 153.

[l] 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. [m] James iv. 6.

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I have now gone through the four different heads, under which I propoſed to ſtate compendiouſly the principal circumſtances which affect our Chriſtian faith.

The reaſons, which I alledged for thus calling your attention to truths of which you muſt often before have heard the greater part, and which might enable us to give a ſatisfactory anſwer to every inquiry concerning the Hope that is in us, were drawn—from the oppoſition at preſent directed againſt our Religion,—from the extenſive utility of interſperſing at times ſome general account of our faith among the particular ſubjects marked out for this lecture,—and from the peculiar benefits conveyed by ſuch general inſtruction to the younger part of my audience, for whoſe improvement this Inſtitution was more immediately calculated.

I doubt not but theſe reaſons will be deemed fully ſufficient to juſtify the choice which I have made of my ſubject. But, independently of all ſuch particular reaſons, ſo unreſtrained is the freedom of our thoughts and actions, and ſo commenſurate with our whole lives is the imperfection of our nature, that the oldeſt, the wiſeſt, and the beſt among us often want to be reminded of the general truths which have been the ſubject of theſe diſcourſes. The information therefore, which has been given

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in them, may, through the grace of God, be eſſentially ſerviceable to all who have attended to it.

May neither that grace, nor our own endeavours, ever be wanting to render ſuch information thus ſerviceable to us all to all eternity!

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TWO SERMONS

ON

THE DOCTRINE

OF THE

HOLY TRINITY.

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SERMON IX.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

IT is an obſervation juſtified by every page of Holy Writ, that Chriſtianity means to act by rational, and not by compulſive motives. The all-perfect Author of our nature was the Author alſo of our Religion, and he acts not contradictorily to himſelf: he is every where conſiſtently wiſe. From the beginning he formed mankind ſo as to give them reaſon for the regulation of their conduct; and to this great principle he refers them in Revelation for determinations in religious as well as other concerns.

St. Peter declares in the text, that we are to be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh us a reaſon of the hope that

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is in us; and we may ſafely apply this declaration, not only to our Chriſtian hope in general, but likewiſe to all the particular doctrines of Chriſtianity; even to thoſe myſterious doctrines of it, which are ſometimes called doctrines of faith in oppoſition to others which are ſuppoſed to be diſcoverable by our own unaſſiſted reaſon. For if they are built on the foundation of inſpired and infallible writings, (and ſuch the Scriptures of our Religion have often been proved to be,) we can have no more ſolid foundation in reaſon for admitting the juſteſt inferences, which are drawn from philoſophy or hiſtory, than for admitting theſe doctrines. Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away; but the words of him, who ſpake in Holy Writ, ſhall not paſs away.

And (bleſſed be that God who has promiſed that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt his Church!) the Scriptures of our Religion are not only infallible, but they have alſo deſcended to us, and doubtleſs will deſcend to our lateſt poſterity, entire and unmixed with the opinions and diſputations of fallible men. So long as the Church has theſe Scriptures to which it may appeal upon all occaſions, as the foundation and teſt of its doctrines, it has effectual means of ſupporting itſelf againſt the aſſaults of all its adverſaries. Bold aſſertions and preſumptuous reaſonings may

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may procure admirers for a ſeaſon, and become in the hands of Providence ſo many trials of our faith; but their end muſt be, that they ſink ſucceſſively into oblivion; while the oracles of truth remain for ever, an impregnable barrier for the Church of Chriſt againſt the aſſaults of hereſy, ſchiſm, and infidelity.

That all the myſterious doctrines of our Religion are built upon this foundation of holy Scripture, is taught by our Church: that the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the principal one among them, is thus circumſtanced, it ſhall be my endeavour to prove by citations from thoſe writings themſelves.

My chief intention here will be to counteract the influence ariſing from falſe explanations of ſingle paſſages of Scripture, by bringing ſo [a] many of theſe paſſages together, as

[a] No paſſage will be cited in a ſenſe, which is not commonly received, and which the author is not fully convinced ought really to be aſcribed to it. But, as his argument is not to depend upon any ſingle text, it is by no means his deſign to repeat the critical vindications, which have been given of ſuch interpretations of Scripture either in former or in later times.

If he has thought it neceſſary to evince in an appendix, with regard to Jer. xxiii. 6. that the Bible-Tranſlation is ſupported by the Seventy, he has entered upon this criticiſm merely becauſe (as far as he knows) the Bible-Tranſlation has not before been at all vindicated in this important reſpect.

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to leave ingenuous minds no room to doubt for a moment concerning the meaning of the whole.

In doing this I ſhall cite no texts concerning the Father; his Godhead being acknowledged and appealed to upon all occaſions. But I ſhall endeavour to ſtate diſtinctly the Scripture-account, firſt, of the Son; ſecondly, of the Holy Ghoſt; and thirdly, of the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: afterwards I ſhall conclude with ſome obſervations upon the whole.

The firſt of theſe three heads will take up moſt of our time, both becauſe the Son is ſpoken of under different characters and in very many paſſages of Scripture, and becauſe the declarations of Scripture concerning him are the moſt common ſubject of controverſy in the important doctrine of the Trinity.

The order, fitteſt to be purſued in bringing together theſe declarations of Scripture concerning him, will be ſuggeſted from an obſervation which may be made, that there is no circumſtance which has contributed more to unſettle and pervert our faith with regard to this ſecond Perſon of the Godhead, than the manner in which we generally ſet about the eſtabliſhment of it. Inſtead of proceeding in the firſt place to inquire into the Scripture-account of his original condition, (with reverence

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rence let all ſuch expreſſions be underſtood,) and afterwards regularly tracing out the ſubſequent parts of Scripture concerning him; we invert this natural method of inquiry, and, from later circumſtances in the deſcriptions of him miſinterpreted, preſume to reaſon concerning the former, venturing by deductions of our own to determine what his firſt condition ought to have been, in contradiction to what Revelation declares that it really was.—Thus, from particular conſtructions of detached parts, concluſions are drawn ſubverſive of the principal doctrines of the whole: and inconſiſtencies are alledged and imputed to figurative language, which derive their exiſtence and ſupport from deſultory and partial views of the ſubject.

To avoid therefore the ſame fatal error, I ſhall endeavour to lay before you the different declarations of Scripture concerning the Son in regular, and, (as far as it can be ſo called,) in chronological order.

It will however be neceſſary to premiſe, that he is called in Scripture "the Word of "God," and [b] "the Angel of God," for reaſons which his agency in divine Revelation will

[b] We are by no means to ſuppoſe from hence that our Saviour was really of any angelic nature; ſince the aſſumption of ſuch a nature would have been an act of condeſcenſion in him. Heb. ii. 16.

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eaſily ſuggeſt; that he is ſpoken of alſo in Scripture under various [c]appellations, which refer to the human nature of our Redeemer; and that, whenever he is diſtinguiſhed by ſuch reference to human nature, we are not from thence to conſider the Son of God as involved in any of our imperfections, but only as [d]condeſcending to be connected in time ſo intimately with human nature, as to give tranſcendent excellence to the whole character of our Redeemer, and as to be included under the ſame [e]perſonal appellations with the man Chriſt Jeſus.

This being premiſed, I may conſider the Son of God as called at times "the Word of "God" and "the Angel of God;" I may without ſcruple apply to him the appellations at large which are given to our Redeemer; and may begin the propoſed relation of the

[c] He is called "Chriſt" by St. Paul before his appearance in that character. 1 Cor. x. 4, 9.

And after his appearance in it he is ſpoken of, as "the "Son of Man who is in heaven." John iii. 13.

[d] Philip. ii. 6, 7.

[e] Thus Hooker—"Howbeit, as often as we attribute "to God what the manhood of Chriſt claimeth, or to "man what his Deity hath right unto, we underſtand by "the name of God and the name of man neither the one "nor the other nature, but the whole perſon of Chriſt in "whom both natures are." Eccl. Pol. l. v. p. 211. Fol. Ed. 1666.

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different declarations of Scripture concerning him with an account of his eternal generation.

This important doctrine is deducible from thoſe texts of Scripture, which declare that he was [f] "the proper Son of God;" from the Septuagint Verſion of that difficult [g] paſſage in the 110th Pſalm, which undoubtedly refers to the Son of God, and which our old Verſion renders literally from the preſent [h] Hebrew "the dew of thy birth is of the womb of "the morning," but which the Septuagint explains by rendering "εκ γαστρος προ εωσφορου "εγεννησα σε," "from the womb before the "morning ſtar I begat thee;" and from the declaration of the prophet Micah, [i] "that his "goings forth had been from old, from ever-"laſting." It is deducible alſo moſt incontrovertibly from the relation, which the λογος muſt bear to God the Father, as the term λογος itſelf imports.

Correſpondently with the eternity of the Son's generation, he is ſaid to have been [k] "be-"fore all things;" he is declared, by his type

[f] Rom. viii. 32. Heb. iii. 6. John v. 18.

[g] Pſ. cx. 3.

[h] By merely tranſpoſing the Silluk or ſtop from מִשְׁחָר, and affixing it to קֹדֶשׁ, the Hebrew agrees with the Septuagint Verſion.

[i] Mic. v. 2. [k] Col. i. 17.

Mel-

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Melchizedec, to have been [k] "without be-
"ginning of days;" he is called [l] "the Alpha
"as well as the Omega, the Beginning as well
"as the Ending;" and he is not only ſaid
"to have life [m] in him," but alſo he ſays ex-
preſsly of himſelf, [n] "before Abraham was,
"I am."

With regard to the generation of the Son, many of the orthodox Chriſtians in the ſecond and third centuries [o] held that his exiſtence was coeval with the exiſtence of the Father, and that he came forth, or was begotten, for the purpoſes of creation. And accordingly later writers have [p] diſtinguiſhed between his gene-

[k] Heb. vii. 3. Jortin ſays on this paſſage, "What "Melchizedec was figuratively, Chriſt was really. Mel-"chizedec had neither beginning of days nor end of life, "nothing being recorded in Scripture with regard to his "birth or death, conſequently the Son of God had in "reality neither beginning of days nor end of life." Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 89.

[l] Rev. i. 8.—The ſpeaker in the 8th, 11th, and 17th verſes of this chapter muſt be the ſame perſon.

[m] John i. 4. [n] John viii. 58.

[o] See on this ſubject the third ſection of Biſhop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith; and more particularly what Waterland ſays concerning Ignatius, Juſtin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, &c. 2d Def. p. 282—306.

[p] They have diſtinguiſhed three generations, "the In-"carnation," "the going forth to creation," and "an "eternal generation." See Waterland's 2d Def. p. 311. and Biſhop Horſley's Tracts, p. 238.

rations

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rations, using the term "eternal generation" to denote the unknown manner in which the Son's existence was thus coeval and eternally connected with that of the Father.

But indeed [q] how the eternal generation of the Son of God is to be explained, is no where revealed in Holy Writ, and certainly is not to be investigated by human reason. The passage of Scripture, which declares that "no "man knoweth the Son but the Father, nei- "ther knoweth any man the Father, but the "Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal "him," at once declares the intimate nature of their relation to each other and our inability to explain it. We can only assert concerning this generation, that there must be somewhat in it essentially different from what has ever been attributed to any but the Son of God; somewhat, which admits in reality of nothing "simile" or "secundum:" otherwise he would not be stiled in Scripture "the only [r] be- "gotten Son of God," and "the only be- "gotten Son of the Father [s] which is in his "bosom."

[q] Du Pin says, "All the Fathers of the 4th century "acknowledged that the generation of the Word was "eternal; but they did not think of explaining how "this generation was made, and they confessed that it is "ineffable and incomprehensible." Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 287.

[r] John iii. 16. [s] John i. 18.

There

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There is nothing in his human generation, nothing in his reſurrection from the dead, which can ſatisfy us with regard to theſe excluſive appellations. Such ſatisfaction can no where be found, except in the generation which we are now conſidering. The moſt exalted beings, which the Almighty has been pleaſed to create in heaven or in earth, are infinitely different from himſelf; and, though they are called his ſons, they are ſo called merely by a figure. Our Saviour in his divine and eternal nature was [t] "the expreſs image "of his Father's Perſon," was [u] "one with the "Father:" and he, who was ſuch, could alone be literally ſaid "to have been begotten "of him" and "to be in his boſom."

But though the Scripture is ſilent concerning the manner of this eternal generation, and we can aſſert nothing on the ſubject, except that it muſt be ſuch as to exclude every creation even of the higheſt archangel from being in the leaſt degree ſimilar to it; yet we are informed explicitly of a moſt important truth, which appears to be eſſentially connected with it, and which it is of much greater conſequence for us to know, "that "the divine nature was eternally poſſeſſed by "the Son;" "the Word (we are informed by

[t] Heb. i. 3. [u] John x. 30.

"St.

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" St. John) was in the beginning with God, " and was alſo himſelf God:" and this, before any being was as yet created, from governing whom by divine commiſſion he could be [w]ſuppoſed to be honoured with the name, as well as inveſted with the power of God.

But, had the Evangeliſt intended to aſcribe any ſuch inferior divinity to the Word of God, he, who was ſo cautious in the ſame chapter as to inform us that [x]" the Baptiſt was not " that Light, but only ſent to bear witneſs of " that Light," would as certainly have added, that the Word was not the true God, but only his repreſentative and deſtined to bear witneſs of him; ſince a miſtake in this caſe was more eaſy, and the conſequences of it might be incomparably more important.

Inſtead however of any ſuch diſtinction, he enforces his aſſertion by repeating immediately without the leaſt limitation, " the ſame " was in the beginning with God." And

[w] This ſuppoſition, which appears to run through the whole of Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine, is founded on no authority from Revelation. When St. John applies the term " God," when Moſes (Gen. xix. 14.) and Zechariah (iii. 2.) apply the term " Jehovah," and when Zechariah applies that of " Lord of Hoſts" (ii.8—11.) to the Father and to the Son ſeparately, and in the ſame paſſages; each of theſe Writers muſt mean to aſcribe the ſame divine nature to the different Perſons thus denominated by the ſame appellations.

[x] John i. 8.

towards

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towards the end of his Goſpel he makes our Saviour addreſs the Father in words of correſpondent import; [y] "and now, O Father, "glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with "the glory which I had with thee before the "world was." His exiſting, as God with God, is here called the glory which he had with the Father; and the time when he had this glory, inſtead of "in the beginning," is ſaid to have been "before the world was." Both are expreſſions of the ſame extent; both imply from eternity. Indeed, as we can form no adequate conception of an eternity paſt, and are wont to find that all our reaſonings on this ſubject terminate in abſurdity, theſe and ſimilar expreſſions are neceſſary to aſſiſt our comprehenſion.

But, if we conſult the other inſpired writings, we ſhall find that this teſtimony of the beloved diſciple to the eternal divinity of our Saviour is ſupported by the concurrence of numberleſs paſſages throughout the whole of Revelation.

In what explicit, what animated, language does Iſaiah announce the divinity of the future Meſſiah! [z] "The voice of him that crieth "in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of Je-

[y] John xvii. 5.

[z] Compare Iſaiah xl. 3, &c. with Luke iii. 4. and Mal. iii. 1.

"hovah,

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"hovah, make ſtraight in the deſert a high "way for our God. Every valley ſhall be ex- "alted, and every mountain and hill ſhall be "made low, and the crooked ſhall be made "ſtraight, and the rough places plain, and "the glory of Jehovah ſhall be revealed." And again (as if to condemn beforehand every feeble and irreſolute declaration of our Saviour's divinity) the prophet breaks forth into exclamation, "O Zion, that bringeſt good ti- "dings, get the up into the high mountain: "O Jeruſalem, that bringeſt good tidings, "lift up thy voice with ſtrength; lift it up, "be not afraid, ſay unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God."

But not to ſeparate this paſſage from other paſſages of Iſaiah, nor the teſtimony itſelf of Iſaiah from that of the other prophets, the writers in general of the Old Teſtament propheſied, that the Redeemer to come was to be [a] "Immanuel" or "God with us;" that he was to be [b] "Jehovah; the [c] Lord God; the [d] "Lord God of Judah; the [e] Lord of Hoſts; "the [f] Fellow of the Lord of Hoſts; [g] the "mighty God."

[a] Iſ. vii. 14.

[b] Zech. iii. 2. xi. 13. xii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 6. See alſo Gen. xix. 24. and the various citations which are made hereafter to prove that the Angel of God was Jehovah.

[c] Iſ. xl. 10. [d] Hoſ. i. 7.

[e] Iſ. vi. 5. Zech. ii. 8. Mal. iii. 1.

[f] Zech. xii. 7. [g] Iſ. ix. 6.

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And the writers of the New Teſtament declare, that "they did not propheſy deceit;" that he really was the [h] Immanuel foretold; that he [i] exiſted in the form of God, as literally as he afterwards aſſumed the form of a ſervant; that "in him dwelt all the [k] fulneſs of "the Godhead bodily; that he was [l] God, our "[m] God, the true [n] God, the great [o] God, God "whoſe [p] throne is for ever and ever, God "[q] over all bleſſed for evermore, the [r] Lord of "Glory, the [s] Lord God of Iſrael, King [t] of "kings and Lord of lords;" one of ſuch a nature as to [u] fill all in all, as to be wherever [w] two or three are gathered together in his name, and as to have all [x] things naked and open to his eyes; that "he was the [y] firſt and "the laſt, which is, which was, and which is "to come, the Almighty; the [z] ſame yeſter-"day, to-day, and for ever."

[h] Matt. i. 23.
[i] Philip. ii. 6, 7.
[k] Col. ii. 9.
[l] John xx. 28. Acts xx. 28.
[m] See the original Greek of 2 Pet. i. 1.
[n] 1 John v. 20. See Burgh's Inquiry, p. 130. and Waterland's Lady Moyer's Sermons, p. 208.
[o] Tit. ii. 13. Rev. xix. 17.
[p] Pſ. xlv. 6. cited Heb. i. 8.
[q] Rom. ix. 5. See Biſhop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith, p. 77, 78. Fol. and Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine, N°. 539.
[r] 1 Cor. ii. 8.
[s] Luke i. 16, 17.
[t] Rev. xix. 16.
[u] Epheſ. i. 23.
[w] Matt. xviii. 20.
[x] Heb. iv. 13.
[y] Rev. i. 8.
[z] Heb. xiii. 8.

Nor

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Nor is there any one among all the incommunicable attributes which are inherent in the eternal Godhead, that may not be immediately deduced from theſe paſſages of Scripture and aſcribed to our great Redeemer. His Eternity, Omnipreſence, Omniſcience, [a]Omnipotence, and Immutability are immediately demonſtrable from them; and are too deciſive to admit of a doubt how perfectly he muſt have been God in the beginning, to whom all theſe incommunicable attributes of the Godhead belong. So ſtrongly therefore is the introduction to St. John's Goſpel ſupported by the other inſpired writings; ſince it appears from numberleſs paſſages in thoſe writings, and not merely from the words of the Evangeliſt himſelf on another occaſion, [b]"that all "things, which the Father hath, are the Son's "alſo."

After ſuch information, we ſhall receive without aſtoniſhment the next part which St. John unfolds to us of our Saviour's hiſtory: "All [c]things were made by him, and without "him was not any thing made that was "made." Or, as St. Paul expreſſes it more

[a] This is deducible from thoſe texts which call him Lord of Hoſts and mighty God, no leſs than from Rev. i. 8.

[b] John xvi. 15. [c] John i. 3.

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fully, [d] " By him were all things created, that " are in heaven and that are in earth, viſible " and inviſible: whether they be thrones, or " dominions, or principalities, or powers, all " things were created by him and for him;" expreſſions too plain and comprehenſive to be reſtrained to any figurative creation; and too forcible to be referred to a mere inſtrumental Creator.

Nor ought any ſuch reference of them ever to have been ſuggeſted and urged as an objection againſt the Catholic Faith, from the uſe of the prepoſition " διὰ" or " by" in theſe paſſages; ſince it is indiſputable, not only that the ſame mode of expreſſion is [e] uſed concerning the Father, but alſo that the [f] Father himſelf refers the works of creation to the Son, without the intervention of any ſuch prepoſition, and in terms the moſt unlimited and moſt eminently characteriſtical of eternal Divinity: " THOU, " LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE " FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEA- " VENS ARE THE WORK OF THY HANDS. THEY " SHALL PERISH, BUT THOU REMAINEST: AND " THEY ALL SHALL WAX OLD AS A GARMENT; " AND AS A VESTURE THOU SHALT FOLD THEM " UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED; BUT

[d] Col. i. 16, 17. [e] Heb. ii. 10. Rom. xi. 36.
[f] Heb. i. 10.

" THOU

"THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL "NOT FAIL."

Beſides, St. Paul aſſerts that all things were created "εις αυτον" "for him," as well as "δι' "αυτου" "by him." The truth is, [g] "the "Scriptures mean to refer the origin of all "things up to both, as to one individual "ſource: they tell us, therefore, there is no-"thing of the Father, but by the Son, and "nothing by the Son, but of the Father:" each is alike efficient Creator. And this is a doctrine which appears to derive weight from the uſe of the plural term "Elohim," or "Gods," to expreſs the Deity, and particularly in the firſt chapter of Geneſis; alſo from the plural language, in which the Being thus denominated deliberates concerning the creation of man, "let us make man in our own "image," and concerning the removal of him from the garden of Eden, "the man is become "like one of us."

But, to diſmiſs the objection, it may be remarked that the attributes, above declared to belong to the Son, prove him qualified for this ſo great a work; while the manner, in which it was executed, might reciprocally be adduced to prove that all the Divine attributes muſt

[g] Waterland's Lady Moyer's Sermons, p. 54.

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have centred in its Author. Indeed the work of Creation is ſo peculiarly the effect of Almighty power, that ſome have queſtioned even the poſſibility of it. And, throughout the whole of Revelation, we find it inſiſted upon, as the criterion of the true God, [h] "the Gods "of the heathen (ſays the Pſalmiſt) are but "idols, but Jehovah made the heavens:" and again we are informed, [i] "that he who built "all things is God."

Nor does St. Paul, in the paſſage above cited, declare that the Son of God made all things only, but alſo that [k] "by him they con-"ſiſt:" or, as we are elſewhere informed, [l] "he ſupporteth all things by the word of "his power." The ſame diſplay of infinite perfection, which ſhines forth in the creation, is as conſpicuous in his preſervation of the world, and calls as loudly for our wonder and adoration.

And as we are aſſured, that no [m] one hath heard or ſeen the Father, but the only begotten Son, who is in his boſom, he hath declared him; ſo we ſhall find from the beginning, that all Revelation proceeded from the Son, and that he was a principal, though not the ſole object of worſhip with true believers.

[h] Pſ. xcvi. 15. [i] Heb. iii. 4. [k] Col. i. 17.
[l] Heb. i. 3. [m] John i. 18. v. 37.

Even,

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Even, with regard to the antediluvian hiſtory, we are informed by St. Peter, that "it "was [n]Chriſt who preached to the ſpirits in "priſon in the days of Noah:" and, as he preached to them by means of Noah, it might be eaſy to infer from thence, that Chriſt alſo was the divine Perſon, who after the flood gave to Noah the inſtructions which he was to deliver down to poſterity. But, not to dwell on this paſſage, I ſhall endeavour to prove more at large, that all that part of Revelation which relates to Abraham and his deſcendants [o]proceeded from the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity, as their God; though at the ſame time it proceeded from him, as "the Angel of God," or, in the language of the New Teſtament, "as "ſent by the Father."

That this Angel of God was the God of Abraham is evident, ſince he [p]calls himſelf by that name in different parts of Scripture. But beſides it may be inferred, that he was the God who ſware unto Abraham: and this will confirm, under the authority of the author of the

[n] 1 Pet. iii. 19.

[o] This is maintained by all the Fathers of the Chriſtian Church, as Biſhop Bull proves—Defence of the Nicene Faith, ſect iv. c. 3. And it is fully admitted by Dr. Clarke in his Scripture Doctrine.

[p] Compare Acts vii. 38. with the 19th and 20th chapters of Exod. and Gen. xxxi. 13. with Gen. xxviii. 13. See alſo Exod. iii. 6.

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Epiſtle to the Hebrews, a doctrine which has in reality been above eſtabliſhed by an induction of particulars, [q] "that there was none "greater than he;" or, to uſe the very remarkable expreſſion of Zechariah, that he was "the Fellow of the Lord of Hoſts."

The 22d chapter of Geneſis begins with informing us, that "God did tempt Abraham "and ſaid." At the 12th verſe the Angel of God ſays, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, "for now I know thou feareſt God, ſeeing "thou haſt not withheld thy ſon from [r] ME." The Angel of God therefore is the ſame with the God before mentioned; ſince no other than that God could be the perſon from whom Abraham did not withhold his ſon. Afterwards the Angel of God called out of heaven a ſecond time, and ſaid, "By myſelf "have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, that in bleſſ-"ing I will bleſs thee, becauſe thou haſt "obeyed my voice." The words, "my voice," therefore confine this oath to the God who tempted Abraham, to him whoſe voice Abraham had obeyed: and ſince he (as we have ſeen) is the ſame with the Angel of God, the

[q] Heb. vi. 13.

[r] If the angel of God had not been the perſon who tempted Abraham to offer up his ſon, he would certainly have uſed the pronoun "him" inſtead of "me," as the term "God" immediately precedes.

oath

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oath muſt be referred to this Angel, however he may himſelf refer it to Jehovah in the third perſon, and there could be none greater than he.

In confirmation of this inference it may be obſerved, that there is another paſſage of Scripture in which the Angel of the Lord ſwears by himſelf. In the 45th chapter of Iſaiah we find an oath of this kind, introduced with even greater ſolemnity than that which we have been conſidering: [s] "I have ſworn by myſelf, "the word is gone out of my mouth in righte- "ouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me "every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall "ſwear."

Now that the ſpeaker is the ſame in this as in the 48th chapter is evident, becauſe both chapters are comprehended within one continued prediction concerning the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus, and their ſeveral parts exactly correſpond. In both the Speaker calls himſelf, "the univerſal Creator," ſays that "he did not ſpeak in ſecret," commands "the "people to aſſemble themſelves," and aſks "who hath declared theſe things?" And yet he profeſſes, towards the concluſion of the 48th chapter, "now the Lord God and his "Spirit hath ſent me," or, more properly, ac-

[s] Iſ. xlv. 23.

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cording to Bp. Lowth's Verſion, "now the "Lord God hath ſent me and his Spirit." He muſt therefore be the Angel or Son of God.

Indeed our Saviour expreſsly ſays in the book of Revelation, [t] "I am the firſt and the "laſt," aſſuming that very title by which the ſpeaker [u] here diſtinguiſhes himſelf: and St. Paul [x] repeatedly declares, that in him the event, predicted with this oath, was to receive its accompliſhment.

But to proceed—If the Angel of God was the Jehovah who thus ſware unto Abraham, there can be no doubt with regard to the God of his deſcendants; ſince the Perſon of their God is particularly [y] limited by this oath. Independently alſo of this circumſtance, the Angel of God ſays explicitly to Jacob, [z] "I "am the God of Bethel, where thou anoint-"edſt the pillar and vowedſt a vow unto me;" though on that [a] occaſion he is called by no other name than "God," and "Jehovah," and "the God of Abraham and the God of "Iſaac." In the ſame manner, when Jacob wreſtles with this Angel, he is ſaid to [b] wreſtle with God. And, in his ſolemn benediction of Joſeph's children, Jacob makes the God of

[t] Rev. i. 17. [u] Iſ. xliv. 6. xlviii. 12. [x] Rom. xiv. 11. Philip. ii. 10. [y] Gen. xxvi. 3. [z] Gen. xxxi. 13. [a] Gen. xxviii. 13. [b] Compare Hoſ. xii. 4. with Gen. xxxii. 30.

Abraham

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Abraham and Iſaac to be the ſame with this Angel: [c] "God, before whom my Fathers "Abraham and Iſaac did walk, the God which "fed me all my life long unto this day, the "Angel which redeemed me from all evil, "bleſs the lads!"

Afterwards Moſes informs us, that it was the Angel of God who [d] appeared to him in the buſh, proclaimed himſelf to be the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob, and firſt aſſumed the incommunicable name, "I am." To this St. Stephen alſo bears witneſs and ſays, that [e] God ſent Moſes by the hand of this Angel. And who was the Jehovah, that conducted the Iſraelites on their departure from Egypt by day in a [f] pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, but the Angel of God, as he is called at the 19th verſe of the 14th chapter of Exodus, though he is elſewhere ſimply and [g] repeatedly ſtyled Jehovah? It was he alſo (as [h] St. Stephen informs us) who gave the law on mount Sinai; though Moſes does not diſtinguiſh him by any other name than Jehovah and God.

And here it may be remarked, that when the people, ſtruck with religious horror at the

[c] Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.
[d] Exod. iii. 2.
[e] Acts vii. 30—35.
[f] Exod. xiv. 19, 20.
[g] Exod. xiii. 21. xiv. 24.
[h] Acts vii. 38.

awful

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awful ſcene, requeſted that they might not hear the voice of God again, and their requeſt was approved; they were immediately informed, that [i] "God would raiſe up a prophet unto "them from among their brethren, like unto "Moſes, and unto him they ſhould hearken." And why ſhould this prediction have been given on this particular occaſion, if it was not to declare, that the God, who now appeared in tremendous majeſty, ſhould at ſome future time aſſume [k] the ſame form with themſelves, that is, be like unto Moſes, and ſpeak ſo that his hearers might not tremble at his voice?

After this delivery of the Law we are informed that Chriſt was the ſpiritual Rock which followed the Iſraelites, and that he was [l] tempted by them in the wilderneſs; the ſame divine Perſon, who was ſent to [m] conduct them to the promiſed land, who would not pardon their offences, and whoſe appellation on ſuch occaſions was, [n] "the Preſence of Jehovah;" the ſame likewiſe, who is ſaid in the 6th chapter of the book of Judges to appear as the Angel

[i] Deut. xviii. 15—18.

[k] Jortin in his Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 198. explains the words, "like unto me," as ſignifying a man like themſelves.

[l] 1 Cor. x. 4, 9. [m] Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

[n] Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15.

of

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of God to Gideon, and is called Jehovah in three different paſſages of that chapter.

But however minutely theſe and many other ſuch paſſages in the early part of the hiſtory of the Iſraelites declare, that our Saviour was their God; we may obſerve, that no declaration of Scripture can be more full and deciſive to this purpoſe, than that in which the royal Pſalmiſt, foretelling the glory of Chriſt's mediatorial kingdom, particularly diſtinguiſhes him from the Father, and marks him out as his own Lord: [o] "The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine "enemies thy footſtool." And, as if to command peculiar attention to this paſſage, our bleſſed Saviour himſelf [p] expreſsly aſcribes it to the Holy Ghoſt.

That the Prophets in the ages after David were inſpired by the Spirit of Chriſt, or by the Holy Ghoſt as ſent by him, is aſſerted by [q] St. Peter. And that they ſpake in the name of the Son, or Angel of God, has been already intimated with regard to Iſaiah, when it was proved that the divine Perſon, in whoſe Name the Prophet ſpake, was ſent "by [r] the Lord

[o] Pſ. cx. i. There is a ſimilar paſſage in Ecclus.—"I "cried to the Lord, the Father of my Lord"—li. 10.

[p] Mark xii. 36. [q] 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

[r] Iſ. xlviii. 16. See on this text p. 327, 328.

"God

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"God and his Spirit." The ſame is moſt conſpicuouſly true with regard to Zechariah. The Angel of God, or the great Saviour of mankind, is introduced under the moſt exalted titles, as the Author of the Revelation vouchſafed to this evangelic Prophet. Thus the ſpeaker in the ſecond [s] chapter, under the name of the Lord of Hoſts, ſays he was ſent by the Lord of Hoſts: in the third chapter he is ſtiled both the Angel of Jehovah and Jehovah himſelf: in the [t] eleventh chapter, under

[s] Zech. ii. 8—11. The Chaldee Paraphraſt might not be ſufficiently acquainted with a plurality of Perſons in the Godhead; and therefore might ſuppoſe by a forced conſtruction that the Perſon here ſent was the prophet Zechariah. But ſuch is the literal and obvious meaning of the words, and ſo entirely does it agree with what the ſame Prophet afterwards declares (iii. 2.) concerning Jehovah who calls upon Jehovah to rebuke Satan, and (to ſay nothing of Zech. iv. 9. and vi. 15.) concerning him who (xiii. 7.) was "the Fellow" (or, as the Hebrew word implies, the equal) "of the Lord of Hoſts;" that, with our preſent knowledge of Chriſt's divine nature, we have abundant reaſon to conclude, that he was the ſpeaker in the whole of the paſſage, being himſelf both the Lord of Hoſts mentioned in the 8th verſe and the Perſon ſent.

What is ſaid above, with regard to the Chaldee Paraphraſt, may be applied in a ſimilar manner to his interpretation of Iſaiah xlviii. 16; and indeed to any interpretation of the paſſages of the Old Teſtament that aſſert our Saviour's Divinity, which is given by men who were not enlightened by Chriſtianity on this moſt important ſubject.

[t] Zech. xi. 13.

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the name of Jehovah, he declares, that "thirty "pieces of ſilver was the goodly price at which "he was prized:" and in the twelfth chapter, under the ſame divine appellation, he ſays, [u] "they ſhall look on me whom they have "pierced:" in all theſe paſſages moſt unequivocally declaring, who and what he was, that ſpake by the Prophet; even "the Lord of "Hoſts" and "Jehovah," that great Perſonage, who, as the Redeemer of mankind, was ſaid to be "ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver, and "to be pierced for their ſins." In Malachi alſo the ſpeaker, who is the Lord of Hoſts, declares, [w] "I will ſend my meſſenger, and he "ſhall prepare the way before me," which is ſaid by three of the Evangeliſts to have been before Chriſt; he therefore muſt himſelf have been both "Chriſt," and "the Lord who was "ſuddenly to come to his temple."

Our Saviour moreover was not only the Author and Giver of Revelation to the Jews; his alſo was the Majeſty viſibly diſplayed in their economy. For whoſe was the glory diſplayed in the old Temple, but that Chriſt's to whom this glory (when repreſented in Iſaiah's viſion) is expreſsly referred by [x] St.

[u] Zech. 12. 10. See, in vindication of the ſenſe in which this text is cited, Pearſon on the Creed, 5th Ed. Fol. p. 201.

[w] Mal. iii. 1. [x] John xii. 41.

John?

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John? And what leſs than the perſonal appearance of the ſame God, whoſe brightneſs ſhone forth in the firſt Temple, and who is ſaid to have been [y] "greater than the Temple," made "the Glory of the [z] latter Houſe greater "than that of the former?"

Our bleſſed Saviour then, or the Angel of God, appears to have been the actor in the moſt diſcriminating occurrences of the Jewiſh theocracy; and the names Jehovah and God appear from collateral paſſages of Scripture to have been frequently given him without any particular marks of diſtinction. We may therefore [a] conclude, that he is intended at various other times when thoſe names are mentioned at large; and that all that part of Revelation, which relates to Abraham and his deſcendants, proceeded from him as their God, though at the ſame time it proceeded from him as "the Angel of God," or, in the language

[y] Matt. xii. 6.

[z] Hag. ii. 9. Or, as this paſſage is rendered by Dr. Blayney and conformably to the Septuagint Verſion, "made the latter Glory of this Houſe greater than the "former."

[a] "Ubicunque non merum angelum ſed ipſum Deum "apparuiſſe liquet, ibi non Patrem ſed Filium intelligen-"dum eſſe primævæ antiquitatis conſentiens judicium re-"ligioſe ſequentes conſtanter affirmamus." Bulli Fid. Nic. Def. ſect. 4. c. 3. §. 16.

of

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of the New Teſtament, "as ſent by the Fa-
"ther."

Thus we have ſeen that deſcriptions of the divine nature of our bleſſed Saviour pervade every part of Revelation: that he was from everlaſting the Son of God, and himſelf God, inveſted with all the titles and attributes of real divinity: that he was the Creator and Preſerver of all things, the Deity and Object of higheſt adoration with true believers before the Goſpel diſpenſation; not however to the excluſion of the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, as appears from their [b] cooperation with him in the creation; but in concurrence or union with them. Indeed if that jealous God, who will not give his glory to another, has thus permitted every diſtinguiſhing mark of the Godhead to center in his beloved Son, ſurely he is not another, but the ſame God; ſurely he and the Father muſt be one in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe of his own aſſertion, [c] "I "and my Father are one."

In the declarations of Scripture concerning our bleſſed Saviour already conſidered, he is repreſented in no other than his divine capacity: the Son of God had not as yet aſſumed any inferior condition. Here therefore we may ſeek for deſcriptions of his own natural

[b] Gen. i. 2, 3. [c] John x. 30.

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ſtate without danger of miſapprehenſion. And theſe we have found conveyed in terms ſo full and ſo expreſſive of perfect divinity, that no believer in Chriſtianity could ever have denied the divine nature of the great Saviour of mankind, were it not that the Lamb of God, who was ſlain for our ſalvation from the foundation of the world, is ſpoken of alſo under a very different nature from that which we have been hitherto conſidering.

What this nature is, and how the remaining parts of our bleſſed Saviour's hiſtory (if I may ſo call it) are to be underſtood, we need only on ſome future occaſion conſult the ſame Scriptures, and purſue the ſame order, to be fully informed.

SERMON

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SERMON X.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1 PET. iii. 15.

Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that aſketh you a reaſon of the Hope that is in you.

IN a former Diſcourſe on theſe words I ſtated that Chriſtianity means to act by rational, and not by compulſive motives: that the text declares we ought to "be ready always to give "an anſwer to every man, that aſketh us a rea- "ſon of the hope that is in us:" and that we may ſafely apply this declaration to all the particular doctrines of our religion, even to the myſterious doctrines of it; ſince theſe latter are admitted by us, becauſe they reſt on the foundation of writings, which have often been proved to be inſpired and infallible.

That they actually do reſt on this foundation, I was to endeavour to prove, as far as relates to the doctrine of the Trinity, by paſ-

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ſages of Scripture, ſo numerous as to leave no room for miſinterpretation with ingenuous minds, and ſo diſpoſed as to ſtate diſtinctly the Scripture-account, Firſt, of the Son; Secondly, of the Holy Ghoſt; and, Thirdly, of the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: afterwards, I was to conclude with ſome obſervations upon the whole.—In ſtating the Scripture-account of the Son I was likewiſe, for reaſons then alleged, to proceed in regular and (as far as it can be ſo called) in chronological order; and in this order I have proceeded to the end of thoſe declarations of Scripture, which apply to him before his manifeſtation in any other than his own divine nature.

I ſhall now reſume the ſeries, which I have been purſuing, of Scriptural declarations concerning our Saviour, and conclude this part, and the remaining parts alſo of my ſubject.

The Prophets under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, while they proclaimed the divinity of the great Redeemer, foretold, that he was to be [a] "pierced," that he was "to be [b] wounded for "our tranſgreſſions," "to be brought as a "lamb to the ſlaughter," "to be cut off from "the land of the living," "and that his ſoul "was to be made an offering for ſin." It was

[a] Zech. xii. 10. [b] Iſaiah liii.

neceſ-

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neceſſary therefore, that the impaſſible Son of God ſhould aſſume ſome nature capable of theſe ſufferings. And "verily [c] he took not "upon him the nature of Angels, but the "ſeed of Abraham:" "he [d] was made a little "lower than the Angels for the ſuffering of "death."

Of this wonderful condeſcenſion St. Paul informs us moſt fully in his exhortation to the Philippians, "Let this [e] mind be in you, "which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, who, being "in the form of God, thought it not robbery "to be equal with God, but made himſelf "of no reputation," (or, as the words ἑαυτον εκενωσε certainly imply, diveſted himſelf of his own proper character,) "and took upon him "the form of a ſervant, and was made in the "likeneſs of men."

With reference to this aſſumption of human nature, the Saviour of mankind, whom we have before ſeen deſcribed excluſively in a divine character, will hereafter be found to be deſcribed at times in the ſame excluſive man-

[c] Heb. ii. 16. [d] Heb. ii. 9.

[e] Philip. ii. 6, 7. "I have taken the pains to examine "nearly all the Fathers of the three firſt centuries who re-"fer to this text: and now I declare, upon the whole, I "have not the ſmalleſt doubt remaining upon my mind "that it is juſtly tranſlated in our Engliſh Bible." Burgh's Inquiry, &c. p. 229. See alſo p. 9. 144—156.

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ner as man. But when he is thus ſpoken of in a human character excluſively, we muſt not forget that the divine nature was ſo intimately connected with the human in our Saviour's perſon, (even while the man Chriſt Jeſus was acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,) as to give tranſcendent excellence to every part of his character. For if Zechariah declares, that [f] "Jehovah was pierced;" and the New Teſtament, that "the [g] Church of God was "purchaſed with his own blood;" we muſt conclude, from ſuch references to God of what was ſuffered by man, that ſo intimate an union was formed between them in our Saviour's perſon, as neceſſarily to communicate tranſcendent excellence to that nature, in which he "offered himſelf up, through [h] the "eternal ſpirit, without ſpot to God."

I before inſiſted upon this excellence, when I ſtated that we were not to conſider the Son of God as involved in any of our imperfections, becauſe he is ſometimes mentioned in Scripture under perſonal appellations which refer to the human nature of our Redeemer. I now inſiſt upon it more fully in vindication of the dignity communicated to this inferior nature of our great Redeemer by its wonderful connection with the divine.

[f] Zech. xii. 10. [g] Acts xx. 28. [h] Heb. ix. 14.

With

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With reference however to the aſſumption of human nature by the Son of God, the firſt prophetic intimation given of a Redeemer marks him out, as "the [i]ſeed of the "woman." Afterwards he is diſtinguiſhed, as "the [k]ſeed of Abraham;" then, as "the [l]"fruit of David's loins;" and the ſubſequent prophecies, while they declare in the moſt deciſive language his divinity, not only deſcribe him under [m]circumſtances totally inapplicable to his Godhead and call him "God's [n]ſervant," but alſo expreſsly "the [o]man of ſorrows," and "the [p]man whoſe name is "Branch." Even the remarkable paſſage before cited from the prophet Micah, which informs us that "his [q]goings forth had been "from old from everlaſting," declares, that he was to "come forth," or to be born, "at "Bethlehem."

In compliance, as it were, with the ſame deſign of inſtructing us diſtinctly concerning the human nature of the Redeemer, St. John, as ſoon as he has aſſerted the eternal divinity of the Word, adds immediately, that "he was "made fleſh and dwelt among us;" or, as the

[i] Gen. iii. 15. [k] Gen. xxii. 18.
[l] Pſ. cxxxii. 11, Acts ii. 30.
[m] Iſaiah liii. [n] Iſaiah xlii. 1.
[o] Iſaiah liii. 3. [p] Zech. vi. 12.
[q] Mic. v. 2.

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words " εσκηνωσεν εν ἡμιν" ought to be rendered, [r] " tabernacled in us;" that is, pitched his tabernacle in our fleſh, as he had before condeſcended to do in the Jewiſh ſanctuary. And thus our bleſſed Saviour himſelf calls his Body his Temple: [s] " deſtroy this Temple, ſays he, " and in three days I will raiſe it up."

Conſiſtently with theſe predictions and theſe declarations of Scripture, when the fulneſs of time was come, " the [t] Holy Ghoſt came upon " the Virgin Mary, and the power of the " Higheſt overſhadowed her, and that holy " thing, which was" (thus myſteriouſly) " born " of her, was called the Son of God." He, who in his divine nature was the proper Son of God, was, in his human nature alſo, his Son more immediately than any other that was ever born of woman. Some time after the appearance of our Saviour in this ſtate of humiliation, St. Luke declares, that " he [u] in- " creaſed in wiſdom, and ſtature, and in fa- " vour with God and man." This muſt refer to his human nature excluſively. It is with the ſame reference alſo not only that all his

[r] See Scott's Chriſtian Life, p. 349.

[s] John. ii. 19. [t] Luke i. 35.

[u] Luke ii. 52. That Chriſt had a human ſoul as well as body is evident from this text. It is a doctrine which was maintained by all the Fathers. See Waterland's 2d Def. p. 228.

bodily

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bodily appearances, but likewiſe all his infirmities and all his ſufferings are to be explained; that (as [x] Irenæus inſiſts) "he felt hunger after "long faſting, was wearied with a journey and "ſat down, manifeſted his love of Lazarus by "tears, ſweated forth drops of blood, was ſor-"rowful in his ſoul, and ſhed from his ſide "both blood and water."

But the predictions of the Old Teſtament are ſo determinate concerning the human nature of Chriſt and the derivation of this nature from the ſtock of Abraham, that the Jews appear never to have doubted of the humanity of their Meſſiah: and the proofs of the accompliſhment of theſe predictions in our Saviour's perſon were ſo unequivocal, that the enemies of our faith have very rarely attempted to deny that "from [y] Abraham (as con-"cerning the fleſh) Chriſt came;" or, as it is expreſſed in [z] different places with the ſame remarkable limitation, "that of the fruit of "David's loins (according to the fleſh) Chriſt "was raiſed up." It is therefore needleſs for me to produce more paſſages of Scripture to prove that our Saviour is ſpoken of excluſively

[x] Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. l. iii. c. 22. Ed. Maſſuet.

Irenæus concludes the paſſage, here referred to, with theſe very remarkable words—"Ταυτα γαρ παντα συμβολα "σαρκος της απο γης ειλημμενης, ἡν εις αυτον ανακεφαλαιωσατο, το "ἰδιον πλασμα σωζων."

[y] Rom. ix. 5. [z] Acts ii. 30. Rom. i. 3.

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as man: his human nature may be conſidered as diſtinctly ſtated in holy Writ and as univerſally acknowledged.

But there is a circumſtance, which here offers itſelf to our conſideration, and on which we can never too much inſiſt. If our Saviour be ſpoken of thus excluſively in his different natures, it ought not to be matter of wonder, that this Son of God and Son of man ſhould be deſcribed occaſionally with all that difference of character, which ſubſiſts in an infinite degree between God and man. It ought not to be matter of wonder, that he, who in the former capacity was "to [a]make the dead hear "his voice," ſhould in the latter "receive [b]au-"thority to execute judgment;" that he, who in the former "knew [c]all things," ſhould in the latter "not know the [d]day and hour "when judgment was to be executed by him-"ſelf;" that he, whom in the former [e]"no "man knoweth but the Father," ſhould tell the Jews in the latter, "that [f]they both knew

[a] John v. 25. [b] John v. 27.

[c] John xvi. 30. xxi. 17.

[d] Mark xiii. 32. In the ſame nature, in which our Saviour is ſaid by St. Luke (ii. 52.) to grow in wiſdom, he is here ſaid not to be abſolutely perfect in it. "The divine "λογος, ſays Waterland, aſſumed with human nature the "ignorance and other infirmities belonging to it." Lady Moyer's Serm. p. 271.

[e] Matt. xi. 27. [f] John vii. 28.

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"him and whence he was;" that he, by whom, as God, "all [g]things conſiſt, ſhould ſay of himſelf, as man, "and now [h]I am no "more in the world."

The importance of attending to this diſtinction between our Saviour's natures may be inferred from the queſtion which he himſelf put to his inſidious enemies,—"how [i]Chriſt could "be David's Lord and at the ſame time his Son?"—a queſtion, by which they were ſo affected, that, as St. Matthew declares, "no "man was able to anſwer him a word, neither "durſt any man from that day forth aſk him "any more queſtions."

But important as it is, that we ſhould attend to the different natures of our Saviour, to which different parts of Scripture are excluſively applied, ſuch application of Scripture is ſtill no more than muſt neceſſarily be expected. For if (as ſome ſeem to think) we could have reaſon to expect that a perſon ſo compounded ſhould not be mentioned in language excluſive of his divinity, it would be as reaſonable alſo for us to expect, that he ſhould not be deſcribed in terms inapplicable to his humanity: and what then would become of every deſcription of his divine nature?

[g] Col. i. 17. [h] John xvii. 11. [i] Matt. xxii. 43.

Beſides

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Beſides, as our great Redeemer was to ſuffer for us and his divinity was exempt from all ſuffering, he could not poſſibly have been mentioned on ſome occaſions otherwiſe than in his human nature excluſively. Who therefore can wonder, that, in this nature, he ſhould be deſcribed merely as a [k] "righteous ſervant?" Or who can doubt of the nature in which he is thus deſcribed; when, in oppoſition (as it were) to his impaſſible divinity, his ſuffering nature is expreſsly ſaid in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews to be the ſource of his obedience, [l] "though a Son, yet learned he obedience "by the things which he ſuffered."

Indeed, as an irrefragable proof that every deſcription of the incarnate Redeemer, which makes him inferior in eſſence to the Father, muſt be referred to his human nature excluſively, it may be obſerved, that, amidſt his humiliation and ſuffering here, he aſſerted the equality, which in his divine nature he then and always had with the Father; as well by permitting at all times the worſhip which was offered him, (though ſuch worſhip, when ſaid in Scripture to have been offered to good men or angels, is immediately diſclaimed by them,) as alſo by not attempting, when his hour was now come, to divert the Jews from the con-

[k] Iſ. xlii. 1. [l] Heb. v. 8.

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ſequence which they drew from his words when he called himſelf the Son of God, or to divert them from any of his former aſſertions from which they had before drawn the ſame conſequence, "that [m] he made himſelf equal "with God."

It is in vain to urge that the Jews might miſtake his meaning in theſe aſſertions. For can we ſuppoſe that the meek and humble Jeſus would have afforded his enemies any pretence for the reaſon, which they alleged for putting him to death, if he had not meant to claim an equality of this kind?

Whence alſo could have ariſen the extreme guilt of the Jews on the occaſion, if he had not in reality been equal with God? They condemned him to die, (as all the Evangeliſts aſſure us,) becauſe they inferred that he claimed this equality. And whence could have ariſen their extreme guilt in this his condemnation? Certainly not from any miſapprehenſion of the true meaning of his words; not from an error, which is no where imputed to them by the Apoſtles, and with which ſo many millions among ourſelves are every day chargeable, if they were then. No: it muſt have ariſen in an eminent degree from a very different cauſe; from that inveterate oppoſition to

[m] John v. 18.

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our Saviour's doctrines and pretenſions, which they moſt maliciouſly conſummated by condemning him to death expreſsly for aſſerting his claim to an equality with God, which he actually poſſeſſed, and which their own [n] prophets had ſo explicitly aſcribed to the great Redeemer of mankind.

Since then it appears that our bleſſed Saviour is both God and man, and ſpoken of excluſively in each capacity; I may ſafely affirm that what is ſaid of him in one of thoſe capacities by no means impairs the perfect reality of the other, and may proceed to conſider the latter part of his Scripture-hiſtory in which he acts in both capacities united.

It was neither as God, nor as man, ſimply, but as God and man united, that our bleſſed Saviour after his reſurrection was to act in his mediatorial office. And though, during his abode upon earth, it is difficult to determine to which of his natures, or whether to both in conjunction, particular circumſtances are at times to be referred; yet, as ſoon as he had completed our ſalvation by his reſurrection from the dead and had fully entered upon his office of Mediator, he appears from thenceforth to act in his mixed character of God-

[n] See the citations above made from Iſaiah, Zechariah, &c.

man.

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man. The Son of man, having visibly ascended into heaven, was from that time exalted to the right hand of the power of God, [o] "angels, and authorities, and powers being "made subject to him," there to reign with the Son of God in his mediatorial kingdom, as Head of the Church. God, having been glorified by the Son of man, now in return "glo-"rified [p] him in himself;" or, what is the same, in conjunction with the divine nature of his Son, and therefore in conjunction with his own.

In this state of glorification he was seen and worshipped by [q] St. Stephen: in this he appeared to [r] St. Paul: in this he is described at large by St. John in different parts of the book of Revelation: and in this his disciples are [s] every where said in Scripture to call upon his name; ascribing [t] glory to him both now and for evermore; and [u] praying for grace,

[o] 1 Pet. iii. 22. [p] John xiii. 32.
[q] Acts vii. 56. [r] Acts ix.
[s] Acts ix. 14. xxii. 16. Rom. x. 11—14. 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 22.
[t] 2 Pet. iii. 18. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 11, 12.
[u] See the proofs in Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine, p. 369. See also particularly in 1 John v. 13, 14, 15. the unlimited extent of the prayers which are to be offered to our Saviour; and in 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. a strong and very clear declaration of the addresses which St. Paul was accustomed to offer to him: though this last text is unfor-

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peace, bleſſing, direction, aſſiſtance, and comfort from him. And to this ſtate we are to refer all thoſe texts concerning the glorification of the Son and the honours conferred upon him in conſequence of the redemption; even that diſtinguiſhed exaltation, foretold of himſelf by the God of Iſrael with a [x] ſolemn oath and declared by St. Paul to be literally accompliſhed in the perſon of Chriſt, [y] "that "at his name every knee ſhould bow of things "in heaven, and things in earth, and things "under the earth; and that every tongue "ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to "the glory of God the Father."

Thus inveſted with all power both in heaven and earth, the Son of God and Son of man ſhall continue to reign in his mediatorial kingdom, till the judgment by the Son of man ſhall be completed; after which time he is himſelf to be made ſubject to the Father, "that [z] God (not the Father ſimply) may be "all in all."

In the mean time the eternal divinity of the ſecond Perſon in the Godhead, which was ſo frequently declared and ſo awfully diſplayed before his incarnation, and which (as

unfortunately thought ambiguous by Dr. Clarke. See alſo Pſ. ii. 12.

[x] Iſ. xlv. 23. [y] Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

[z] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

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I inſiſted) was not impaired by the nature of a ſervant that he myſteriouſly aſſumed for our redemption, is equally unimpaired by the mediatorial kingdom, which he holds at preſent under the Father for the government of the Church and the ſalvation of his faithful ſervants. When this kingdom ſhall be ſuperſeded by the accompliſhment of its end; when Chriſt ſhall have [y] "preſented TO HIMSELF "a glorious Church," and "God [z] ſhall be "all in all;" we may reſt aſſured, that he, who was "God with God in the beginning," who was [a] "in heaven with God" whilſt he was incarnate here on earth, and who, as the Lamb, is at preſent in his mediatorial kingdom "the ſame [b] Temple with the Lord God Al"mighty," will be alſo one indiviſible God with him to all eternity.

Such is the regular, and (as far as it can be ſo called) chronological relation, which I propoſed to give, of the different declarations of Scripture concerning the Son of God or our bleſſed Saviour. I ſhall therefore paſs on to the ſecond head, and ſtate the Scripture-account of the Holy Ghoſt.

As the Son was begotten of the Father, ſo

[y] Epheſ. v. 27. [z] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

[a] John iii. 13. See alſo the original Greek of John vi. 46.

[b] Rev. xxi. 22.

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we are informed that the Holy Ghoſt [c] "pro-"ceeded from the Father." But he muſt alſo have proceeded from the Son; for he is [d] called the "Spirit of the Son," no leſs than of the Father; and by a moſt ſignificant alluſion he is made to iſſue, as it were, immediately for him: "he breathed on them," declares [e] St. John, and ſaid unto them, "Receive ye "the Holy Ghoſt."

Since the Scripture has ſaid nothing concerning the manner, in which the Son was begotten and in which the Holy Ghoſt proceeded, and human reaſon can make no diſcovery on ſuch ſubjects; we cannot poſſibly aſcertain the difference between this generation and proceſſion. We know indeed that our bleſſed Saviour is called the only begotten Son of God to the excluſion of all creatures from any ſimilar Sonſhip; and that this appellation muſt exclude the Holy Ghoſt alſo from all reference by Sonſhip to the firſt Perſon of the Trinity.

But, whatever be the difference between the generation of the Son and the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, as we have ſeen that a diſtinct perſonality was poſſeſſed by the Son, ſo we

[c] John xv. 26.
[d] Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 11. Philip i. 19.
[e] John xx. 22.

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ſhall find that a perſonality of the ſame kind is explicitly aſcribed to the Holy Ghoſt. "When [f] "he," ſays our bleſſed Saviour, "the Spirit "of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all "truth: for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf: "but whatſoever he ſhall hear, that ſhall he "ſpeak; and he will ſhew you things to come. "He ſhall glorify me; for he ſhall receive of "mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. All "things, that the Father hath, are mine: "therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, "and ſhew it unto you." No language can more determinately and fully aſcribe a perſonality to the Holy Ghoſt, diſtinct from that of the Father and that of the Son: the Holy Ghoſt is not only made to act and to ſpeak, but likewiſe to hear.

Accordingly, as a perſon he was manifeſted by an external appearance, "deſcending [g] in "a bodily ſhape" upon our bleſſed Saviour; and he is joined in the form of [h] baptiſm with the two other Perſons of the Godhead, being mentioned in it after the Son, and not immediately after the Father, as [i] might be expected if he were to be conſidered in any light as an attribute of the Father.

[f] John xvi. 13, 14, 15. [g] Luke iii. 22.
[h] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[i] See Biſhop Horſley's Tracts, p. 305.

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Like the Son too, the Holy Ghoſt is deſcribed as poſſeſſing the divine nature in the fulleſt and moſt perfect manner. He is proved, by immediate inference from various paſſages of Scripture, to be one and the ſame with [k]God and [l]Jehovah; and therefore himſelf both God and Jehovah. The incommunicable attributes of the Godhead are alſo indiſputably aſcribed to him. His eternity is expreſsly aſſerted, when he is called "the [m]eternal Spi-"rit." His infinite Holineſs is declared, both when he is emphatically ſaid to be "the Holy "Spirit," and when Chriſt is ſaid to "have "[n]offered himſelf up through him without "ſpot to God," affording us an example of that perfect goodneſs which belongs to God [o]alone. His Omnipreſence is evident, ſince he not only [p]reſides in all good Chriſtians, but he alſo at the ſame time [q]"ſearcheth all "things." His Omniſcience is impreſſed upon us by the judgment inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira for "tempting this Spirit [r]of the "Lord," or for doubting of his infinite know-

[k] Acts v. 3, 4. Compare 1 Cor. vi. 19. with 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. See Luke i. 35. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3.

[l] Compare Exod. xxxiv. 34. with 2 Cor. iii. 17. and Iſaiah vi. 9. with Acts xxviii. 25.

[m] Heb. ix. 14.

[n] Heb. ix. 14.

[o] Luke xviii. 19.

[p] John xiv. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 19.

[q] 1 Cor. ii. 10.

[r] Acts v. 4—11.

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ledge; and again more fully, by that moſt remarkable declaration of St. Paul, "that [s] he "ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of "God." And his Omnipotence may be inferred from the miraculous powers which he beſtowed, even thoſe exerciſed by our Saviour himſelf. Moreover, blaſphemy againſt him is the only ſin which is declared to be unpardonable.

Since the Holy Ghoſt is no where ſaid to have aſſumed any inferior nature, he is no where deſcribed as eſſentially inferior to either of the other Perſons of the Trinity. Even when it is ſaid in St. Mark, "of [t] that day and "hour knoweth no one; no, not the Angels "which are in heaven, neither the Son;" it is by no means added, "neither the Holy "Ghoſt." It may be objected here, that he is ſaid to be ſent by the Father and by the Son, as the Son himſelf was ſent by the Father or was his Angel. This however might be deſigned, in part, to declare the concurrence of the whole Trinity in each individual operation; whilſt it more fully declares that [u] ſubordination

[s] 1 Cor. ii. 10. [t] Mark xiii. 32.

[u] See Dr. Randolph's Vindication of the Trinity, p. 21. Dr. Clarke has produced 240 texts of Scripture to prove that the Son is ſubordinate to the Father, which no ſound member of the Catholic Church has ever denied. He certainly would not have taken all this trouble (as Dr. Waterland remarks) if he could have ſhewn by any one

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of Perſons in the Godhead, by which it muſt ever be remembered that the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity is inferior to the firſt, and the third to both the others. But in whatever manner we explain ſuch miſſions, it is evident from the titles uſed on theſe occaſions by Zechariah, that there was an equality of nature in the Perſon ſending and in him who was ſent; ſince he ſays, [x] "the Lord of Hoſts was "ſent by the Lord of Hoſts."

Without paying more attention therefore to ſuch objections, I ſhall proceed thirdly to ſtate the Scripture-account of the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

This head will not neceſſarily require much of our time after what has been already ſaid. If each of theſe three Perſons is proved from Scripture to be God and Lord, we are compelled by the Chriſtian verity (as the Athanaſian Creed expreſſes it) to acknowledge each by himſelf to be God and Lord. And if we are forbidden by the ſame Scripture, or (to uſe the

text that the Son is not really God of the ſame nature with the Father.

Among theſe texts, that in St. John's Goſpel (xiv. 28.) "my Father is greater than I," may perhaps be much more properly applied to the divine nature of the Son in proof of his ſubordination to the Father, than many others in Dr. Clarke's liſt.

[x] Zech. ii. 8—11.

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words of the Creed juſt mentioned) by the Catholic religion to ſay there be three Gods or three Lords, then theſe three Perſons muſt be one God and one Lord.

However we need not reſt our cauſe upon this argument, though it is certainly concluſive: theſe three Perſons are actually ſpoken of in Scripture as one divine Being. This doctrine and all that has before been ſaid, concerning the ſending of the Son and the Holy Ghoſt by the Father, is emblematically at leaſt, if not literally, repreſented in the 18th and 19th chapters of the book of Geneſis.

The ſame doctrine is evidently ſet forth in the [y] paſſage of the prophet Iſaiah which has been cited above, and in which the ſpeaker, who is the only God and eternal Creator, ſays, "he was ſent by the Lord God and his Spirit:" or, [z] more properly "he and the Spirit were "ſent by the Lord God." That no one could be greater, than the Perſon ſpeaking on the occaſion, has been proved from the oath which he ſware by himſelf; that the Lord God and his Spirit were not leſs is indiſputable, from what has been ſaid above: and as he repeatedly declares, "there is no God beſides him," they muſt be the ſame God with him.—It ap-

y Iſaiah xlviii. 16. z See Biſhop Lowth's Verſion.

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pears alſo moſt evidently from the threefold doxology contained in the ſixth chapter of Iſaiah, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hoſts." This doxology is addreſſed to a Being that ſays of himſelf in the plural number, "Who will go for us?" It certainly applies to the Father, from the impoſſibility of excluding him from the attribute and appellation here introduced: it applies alſo as certainly to the Son, whoſe glory, [x] St. John ſays, the prophet was then ſeeing: and to the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe we are [y] expreſsly told it was the Holy Ghoſt, who ſpake by Iſaiah the words, which are immediately after uttered by the divine Perſon, that ſaid, "Who will go for us?" It is notwithſtanding addreſſed to one Lord of Hoſts.

But no where is the one eſſential Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, taught in Scripture with more preciſion and force than in the form of baptiſm: [z] "Go ye," ſays our Saviour to his diſciples, "teach all nations, bap-"tizing them in the name of the Father, and "of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt." Doubtleſs in a matter of ſo much conſequence, as the original inſtitution, or the firſt enunciation, of that faith which Chriſtians were for ever

[x] 1 John xii. 41.
[y] Acts xxviii. 25.
[z] Matt. xxviii. 19.

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[a] to avow and defend, our Saviour muſt mean to have the declaration full and determinate: he muſt mean rather to clear up, than to increaſe, the doubts of weak minds. This baptiſmal form therefore may be conſidered as deciſive on the ſubject before us.

For, if there are confeſſedly in the holy Scriptures many paſſages, aſſerting the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as of the Father; and many paſſages aſſerting the unity of the divine eſſence; and if our bleſſed Saviour at the time of his final departure from mankind, when he could be ignorant of no part of the Revelation which was to be delivered down to his Church, when he was inſtituting the form itſelf of admiſſion into it, and moreover when he had lately been put to death for making himſelf equal with God, was, notwithſtanding, ſo far from explaining in a different ſenſe any of theſe paſſages, that, having joined the three Perſons together in one name, he commanded his diſciples to teach all nations and baptize them in this name; what leſs can we infer from thence,

[a] That this form of Baptiſm was in conſtant uſe among Chriſtians from the beginning, we may infer both from the queſtion propoſed in the Acts of the Apoſtles to ſome who had not heard of the Holy Ghoſt, "to what then "were ye baptized?" and from their anſwer, "to "John's" (not to Chriſt's) "baptiſm." Acts xix. 3.

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than that our Saviour meant to inſtruct us, in the moſt deciſive and ſolemn manner, that theſe three Perſons are one indiviſible God? And what additional need of citation can there be to prove that this important doctrine of our Church is built on the foundation of inſpired and infallible writings?

Thus I have endeavoured to ſtate diſtinctly the Scripture-account, Firſt, of the Son; Secondly, of the Holy Ghoſt; and, Thirdly, of the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. I am now to conclude with ſome obſervations upon the whole.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as profeſſed by our Church, is built then, as we have ſeen, upon the foundation of Scripture. But how the three Perſons of this Trinity exiſt in one Godhead, is a queſtion on which Revelation is ſilent, and concerning which, (as hath been obſerved with regard to the eternal generation and the incarnation of the Son, and the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt,) our own reaſon can teach us nothing. Such exiſtence has nothing ſimilar to it in the created world. The divine nature is, and muſt be, a nature "ſui generis" in the higheſt ſenſe of the words, and can admit of no compariſon with the things without it.

Indeed we have not the leaſt foundation for ſuch a compariſon. We know nothing of ſpirit,

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ſpirit, nothing of ſelf-exiſtence, nothing of eternity: and ſurely we cannot reaſon concerning them from matter, creation, and time, things totally incommenſurate with them. The method then of reaſoning by [b] analogy, from which we univerſally derive our knowledge of the natures of things and not from their eſſences themſelves, can have no place with regard to the divine nature. It certainly therefore ought not to be matter of objection or of aſtoniſhment with men accuſtomed to philoſophical reaſoning, that the manner, in which the three Perſons of the Godhead exiſt in one divine eſſence, is entirely above our comprehenſion, or that it ſhould ever remain a myſtery to us.

[c] Illuſtrations of this doctrine may indeed

[b] Mr. Hume ſays very juſtly, (as far as relates to a phyſical conſideration of the divine nature,) "The Deity is a "ſingle Being in the univerſe, not comprehended under "any genus or ſpecies, from whoſe experienced attributes "or qualities we can by analogy infer any attributes or "qualities in him." Eſſays, vol. ii. p. 162.

[c] Dean Sherlock, in his Vindication of the doctrine of the holy and ever-bleſſed Trinity, endeavours to illuſtrate the manner in which the three Perſons of the Godhead exiſt in one God by making their union conſiſt in mutual conſciouſneſs. "They are diſtinguiſhed, as three finite "and created minds would be, by ſelf-conſciouſneſs. "They are united into one by a mutual conſciouſneſs to "each other, which no created beings have." 4to. p. 67. And again: "This is that eſſential unity, which is be-

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be attempted from a desire to obviate in weak minds objections against its belief. It may be insinuated, that as parts exist in created beings, so intelligent persons (though not in the same manner, nor such persons as we can comprehend,) exist in the all-perfect God; and that the three Persons, Father, Word or Son, and Spirit, are included in the very idea of God; so that if there could be three Gods, there would be [d] three Fathers, three Words or Sons, and three Spirits. But we have not faculties to proceed far in such illustrations. Rational minds, which are convinced that the doctrine rests on the authority of Scripture, can require no other satisfaction concerning it than merely to know that it contains no absurdity.

And this it is so far from containing, that nothing is in reality to be found in it, which is in the least inconsistent with the deductions of sound reason on the subject. The different demonstrations of the unity of the Godhead,

"tween the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are es-
"sentially united by a mutual consciousness to whatever
"is in each other, and do by an internal sensation (I
"want other words to express it) feel each other, as they
"do themselves: and therefore are as essentially one, as
"a mind and spirit are one with itself." p. 68.

[d] See Bishop Horsley's Tracts, p. 262. See also, on this subject, Dean Sherlock's Vindication of the Trinity, p. 129.

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which have been attempted from reaſon in modern times, either fall entirely [e]ſhort of their intended proof, or they prove [f]only the unity of the divine nature: and this they prove from the impoſſibility of any difference in nature between all-perfect beings. Such reaſonings therefore, as far as they are at all effectual, extend to the excluſion of ſeparate divine natures; but not to the excluſion of ſeparate divine Perſons in the ſame nature.

Among the ancients the Platoniſts are [g]moſt diſtinguiſhed by reaſonings of this kind; and, from [h]whatever ſource they may ultimately have drawn their principles, they are ſo remarkable for profeſſing tenets concerning the Deity which correſpond in many reſpects with our doctrine of a Trinity, that the doctrine itſelf has been ſaid to be derived from them. But the paſſages, which are cited above from Scripture-writers who lived many hundred years antecedently to the exiſtence of the Platonic ſect, conſpicuouſly prove the

[e] See Grotius and Clarke.

[f] See Dean Hamilton's attempt to prove the exiſtence of the Supreme Being in a demonſtrative manner.

[g] Among the ancient Pagans there were others beſides the Platoniſts, who had ſome notion of a Trinity: this hath been fully proved by Cudworth.

[h] Probably from tradition derived from the moſt ancient Revelation. See Bp. Horſley's Tracts, p. 42—46. 224, &c.

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erroneouſneſs of thoſe [i] philoſophers and hiſtorians, who refer the origin of the Scripture-doctrine of a Trinity to this ſect; and leave us the unallayed poſſeſſion of every plea in vindication of the general reaſonableneſs of our doctrine, which can be urged from the profeſſion of ſimilar tenets by men, who, before the Chriſtian Era, were eminently diſtinguiſhed by inquiries, and argumentative deductions, concerning ſuch ſubjects.

Much has been done in [k] confirmation of the

[i] Dr. Prieſtley and Mr. Gibbon.

[k] The only plauſible objections, which can be urged independently of Scripture againſt the doctrine of the Trinity, muſt be drawn from the opinions of the early Chriſtians concerning it. Objections of this ſort have been repeatedly urged and as often anſwered. With what ſucceſs they have been anſwered, we may judge, in ſome meaſure, from the conceſſion of Dr. Prieſtley in his Defence of Unitarianiſm for the year 1787. "I allow "(ſays he, p. 139.) all that Biſhop Bull and Mr. Burgh "aſcribe to the Fathers of the ſecond and third century; "I allow that they held the doctrine of the divinity of "the Son, at leaſt; but it was in a qualified ſenſe, and by "no means the ſame that was maintained after the coun-"cil of Nice. I have alſo diſtinctly ſhewn whence the "notion of theſe Fathers was borrowed; but what I "maintain, and by evidence drawn from their own writ-"ings, is, that while the learned Chriſtians were Trini-"tarians, the common people, who had no notion of Pla-"toniſm, were ſimply Unitarians."

As to the authentic and uninſpired writers of the firſt century, they are very few, and their productions not very conſiderable. But Biſhop Bull and Mr. Burgh might

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doctrine of the Trinity by appeals to the Fathers and to the tenets of the primitive Church. But on the foundation of Scripture it muſt reſt for its principal ſupport even with men of learning. On this it reſts for its whole ſupport with the generality of Chriſtians. It is therefore of extenſive importance that it ſhould be fully and often ſtated from thence; and ſo, as to be intermixed as little as poſſible with foreign and fallible matter.

That the body of evidence, here produced from Scripture in defence of this doctrine, ſhould be collected from all the different parts of it, is no more than might be expected in citations from a Revelation which reduces not its doctrines to regular ſyſtems; and ought to afford no matter of objection to thoſe, who allow that all Scripture proceeds from the ſame

might have furniſhed Dr. Prieſtley with abundant reaſon for including them alſo in his conceſſion.—And as to the faith of the unlearned Chriſtians of the firſt ages, (to ſay nothing of the inferences which muſt ever be drawn in favour of its orthodoxy from the Trinitarianiſm of their learned brethren) was it not of theſe, that Pliny ſays, it was their cuſtom to ſing hymns "Chriſto tanquam Deo?" Beſides, (as Jortin ſays in his Remarks on Eccl. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 90.) "if the opinion of Chriſt's Divinity had not "prevailed commonly among the Chriſtians of the firſt "and ſecond centuries, how came it to paſs that Adrian "is ſaid to have deſigned to deify Jeſus Chriſt, or that "Severus Alexander intended it?"

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infallible Spirit. The enemies of our eſtabliſhment generally wiſh on this occaſion to ſeparate ſome parts from other parts of Scripture; but before they can do this [1]effectually, they are forced to deny the univerſal inſpiration of it. While therefore we defend the univerſal inſpiration of Scripture, we ought never to depreciate any part of this evidence by a diſcriminating and unqualified preference of the reſt.

The Scriptures are one great body, one complete whole. Nor do the Jewiſh and the Chriſtian Revelations reflect light on each other merely in general points of view, but alſo with regard to particular doctrines. Why he, who ſpake in times paſt by the Prophets, has afforded to different ages different degrees of information on the important ſubject before us, it might be preſumptuous in us to inquire. Thoſe, who had ſuch information from particular parts only of Scripture, were anſwerable in their faith for no more: we, who have

[1] See, in Dr. Prieſtley's Defence of Unitarianiſm for 1787, p. 66, the opinions of both himſelf and Dr. Price on the inſpiration of Scripture.

Though Dr. Clarke entitles his book on the Trinity "The Scripture-Doctrine," without citing any text from the Old Teſtament in the body of his work, yet he very fully acknowledges the importance of ſuch texts of Scripture in various notes.

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means of founding this article of our Religion upon the whole of that divine Revelation which was designed for the instruction of mankind, can never be too cautious not to neglect or undervalue any part of it.

If I have omitted many passages of Scripture which might have been cited on the occasion, this omission has not arisen from any persuasion of their want of importance or from any disposition to give up at once those among them which have been disputed; but from a persuasion that the citations, which I have made, are numerous enough to secure the great object which I at first proposed, and to preclude with ingenuous minds all danger from false explanation.

After all however, if the passages of Scripture here cited, or indeed if all that can be cited, in vindication of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity should be thought liable to objection and should not be sufficient to convince every one, let it be remembered, that so various are the minds of men and so inexhaustible the sources of objection, that the arguments adducible from reason, in vindication of the plainest articles of natural Religion, are not sufficient to convince every one. Let it be remembered also, that as the general faith of a Christian is to be a virtue, as no demonstration of the truth of Christianity in general is

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either promiſed or given, ſo as to amount to a compulſive evidence in its favour, we ought not to be ſurpriſed if we meet with circumſtances of the ſame kind with regard to ſome of its particular doctrines. If the paſſages of Scripture here cited are abundantly ſufficient to furniſh judicious and humble Chriſtians with reaſons for believing in this great article of our religion, with reaſons for the faith which in this reſpect is in them, it is all that ought to be thought eſſential to its eſtabliſhment and vindication.

But whilſt we are always to be ready to bring forward ſuch reaſons in anſwer to our opponents, and in vindication of our religious profeſſion; we muſt be careful never to depart from the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, ſo as to engage in a ſubject of this nature with any other diſpoſition, than that which is enjoined in the words immediately following the text, namely, "with meekneſs and fear."

APPEN-

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APPENDIX.

AMONG the texts of the Old Teſtament, by which it has been [a] proved that the incommunicable name, "Jehovah," is applied to our bleſſed Saviour, I have referred to Jer. xxiii. 6.

It is well known, that this text has been ſo rendered in a late very learned tranſlation of Jeremiah, as entirely to exclude the uſe which I have made of it. I therefore think it neceſſary to ſay ſomewhat in vindication of the Bible tranſlation of the paſſage: otherwiſe, as it has not hitherto been vindicated, the reference which I have made to this text may be thought in a great degree, if not entirely, indefenſible.

The Hebrew words of the paſſage in queſtion are, "וזה שמו אשר יקראו יהוה צדקנו"— Our Bible-tranſlation is, "And this is his name "whereby he ſhall be called, the Lord our "Righteouſneſs."

[a] See page 319.

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The new tranſlation is, "And this is the "name by which Jehovah ſhall call him, our "Righteouſneſs."

To this tranſlation is ſubjoined the following note, after another which is not neceſſarily connected with it: "I doubt not but ſome "perſons will be offended with me for depriv- "ing them by this tranſlation of a favourite "argument for proving the divinity of our "Saviour from the Old Teſtament. But I "cannot help it: I have done it with no ill "deſign, but purely becauſe I think and am "morally ſure that the text, as it ſtands, will "not properly admit of any other conſtruc- "tion. The Seventy have ſo tranſlated before "me, in an age when there could not poſſibly "be any bias of prejudice either for or againſt "the beforementioned doctrine; a doctrine "which draws its *deciſive* proofs from the "New Teſtament only. In the parallel paſ- "ſage, ch. xxxiii. 16. the expreſſion is a lit- "tle varied, but the ſenſe according to a juſt "and literal tranſlation is preciſely the ſame: "And this is he whom JEHOVAH ſhall call, "OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

As the Hebrew words will admit of either of the two tranſlations, the reference, which the Author of the new tranſlation makes on this occaſion to the Seventy, is highly proper: we certainly need not be afraid to abide by their

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their verſion, without any notice of the undiſputed ſupport which our tranſlation derives from every other old verſion; ſince it is moſt deciſive in favour of the Bible-conſtruction of the word "יהוה" in the paſſage which we are conſidering.

The words of the Seventy are, [b] Και τουτο το ονομα αυτου, ὁ καλεσει αυτον Κυριος, Ιωσεδεκ. This is a literal verſion of all the Hebrew text (except the affix נו which is virtually [c] included under Ιωσεδεκ) with this addition, that, whereas יקראו may be rendered [d] "they," or "men," "ſhall proclaim;" or ſingularly and indefinitely "one ſhall call him;" or again definitely "he ſhall call him:" the Seventy not only render it "he ſhall call him," but alſo inſert the particular "He," namely "Κυριος." For, that the Seventy did not give this term "Κυριος" as a tranſlation of the "יהוה" is indubitable, ſince they join that term to "צדק" forming [e] "Ιωσεδεκ" from both; and there

[b] See Grabe's Edition.

[c] Theodoret in his Comment on the paſſage ſays, "δηλοι το ονομα Κυριος δικαιοσυνη ἡμων."

[d] Verbs plural are often uſed imperſonally in Hebrew. See Job xix. 26. Pſ. cxlv. 6. See alſo "καλεσουσι" uſed in the ſame manner. Matt. i. 23.

[e] That "יהוה" is joined to "צדק" in the word "Ιωσεδεκ" will not be doubted by thoſe who conſult Leuſden's Onomaſticum, and who ſee that Stock in his Clavis to the Greek Teſtament derives Ιωραμ from יהוה and רם, and Ιωσαφατ from יהוה and שפט.

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cannot be aſſigned a probable reaſon, why they ſhould join any "יהוה" to "צדק," if they had not thought that "יהוה" was actually connected with it in the original. It is very obvious why they might inſert the "יהוה," or "Κυριος," in the other caſe; ſince if they thought the ſubject to be definite and the verb of the ſingular number, the nominative, which they would give to it, muſt be "He" or "Κυριος."

But what places this matter beyond all doubt, is the parallel paſſage in Jer. xxxiii. 16. to which alſo the Author of the new tranſlation refers the reader.

The Hebrew words in that paſſage are, "וזה אשר יקרא לה יהוה צדקנו." I entirely approve of the criticiſm in the new tranſlation on the pronoun "לה;" it ought to be rendered "him," not "her." Accordingly, the paſſage may be rendered in the words of our Bible with an alteration of the pronoun "ſhe,"

To obviate any objection, which may ariſe from theſe compounded names, againſt the application of the term יהוה to our Saviour, as a proof of his divinity, it muſt be obſerved, that it is not applied by Jeremiah to him in any ſuch compounded manner, as it is uſed in "Joram," "Jehoſaphat," "Jedidiah," &c.; but it is applied ſeparately, "צדקנו," being mentioned diſtinctly after it. And this is done alſo by the Seventy, as ſoon as they are at liberty to do it without an awkward repetition of the word "Κυριος." Jer. xxxiii. 16.

"and

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" and this is the name wherewith *he* ſhall be " called, the Lord our Righteouſneſs."

The new tranſlation of the paſſage is given in the Tranſlator's note which is cited above.

But how do the Seventy render it? They render it thus, [e] " Και τουτο το ονομα ᾧ κληθησεται, " Κυριος δικαιοσυνη ἡμων." As the Hebrew word

[e] As doubts have been entertained whether Jer. xxxiii. from verſe 14, as it ſtands in our editions of the Septuagint, be really part of the Septuagint Verſion, it may be uſeful to prove, that the verſe in queſtion, namely, the 16th, is part of this Verſion, from the authority of Theodoret, who gives us this verſe as it ſtands in Grabe and Breitinger, except that he has ὁ inſtead of ᾧ before κληθησεται; and he thus comments upon it. " Τουτο το ονομα " και εν τοις προσθεν εντεθεικε τη των Ἑβραιων—καλεσας φωνη " Ιωσεδεκ." Theodoret therefore has not only preſerved the Septuagint Tranſlation of the verſe, but he has alſo been remarkably expreſs in referring it to its proper author by aſcribing it to the tranſlator, who " εν τοις προσθεν " εντεθεικε—Ιωσεδεκ," that is, " had before introduced— " the term Ιωσεδεκ," and this was undoubtedly the Septuagint Tranſlator. Jer. xxiii. 6.

Beſides, Theodoret's commentary gives full authority to this paſſage, as part of the Septuagint Verſion; becauſe (as Hody proves) he believed in the miraculous ſtories which had been related concerning the manner in which this Verſion was made, and therefore would doubtleſs uſe no other; and beſides, becauſe he actually uſes it, even when he prefers particular parts of other Verſions in his explanatory obſervations, as may be ſeen at once by an examination of the text commented upon by Theodoret in the paſſages cited by Hody de Bibl. Text. p. 327.

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" יקרא" is properly rendered paſſively " κληθη-
" σεται," and the word " Κυριος" has not been added on the occaſion; the Seventy now at once render the terms " יהוה צדקנו" " Κυριος δικαιοσυνη ἡμων," inſtead of rendering them " Ιωσεδεκ," as they did [f] before, when the term " Κυριος" had been previouſly inſerted as a nominative to the verb " יקראו."

It is hardly poſſible that a concurrence of ſtronger circumſtances ſhould be deſired to prove, as far as the Septuagint Verſion can prove it, that the term " Jehovah," or " Lord," is properly connected with " our Righteouſ-
" neſs" in the Bible-tranſlation of both the paſſages which we have been conſidering; and conſequently that the term " Jehovah" is really applied to our bleſſed Saviour in Jer, xxiii. 6.

[f] Jer. xxiii. 6.

A VIN-

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A VINDICATION

OF

CERTAIN TEXTS IN ZECHARIAH

WHICH RELATE TO THE DOCTRINE OF

THE HOLY TRINITY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ANSWER TO THE OBSERVATIONS ON THIS SERMON CONTAINED IN DR. BLAYNEY'S APPENDIX TO HIS NEW TRANSLATION OF ZECHARIAH.

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SERMON XI.

ZECH. ii. 8—11.

For thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; After the glory hath he ſent me unto the nations which ſpoiled you: for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.

For behold I will ſhake mine hand upon them, and they ſhall be a ſpoil to their ſervants: and ye ſhall know that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me.

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the Lord.

And many nations ſhall be joined to the Lord in that day, and ſhall be my people: and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto thee.

THERE is no part of holy Scripture that more fully vindicates thoſe confeſſions of our faith, which call upon us to acknowledge a plurality of perſons in the Godhead, than the very remarkable paſſage of Zechariah which I have now read to you. Nor ought any believer in the New Teſtament to be ſurpriſed at the declarations contained in it, or to be deterred in

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in the leaſt from receiving them in their obvious and literal ſenſe.

A paſſage, which, like the text, declares, "that the Lord of Hoſts was ſent by one "who himſelf is the Lord of Hoſts" ought not for a moment to excite aſtoniſhment in a Chriſtian; knowing, as he muſt, that the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity, who is ſo often ſaid "to have been ſent by the Father," is not only called in the New Teſtament [a] "God," but alſo is called by a name which is allowed to be equivalent to "the Lord of "Hoſts," namely, [b] "the Almighty."

It might indeed ſtagger the faith of thoſe, who had no opportunity of being inſtructed by ſuch additional information on the ſubject. We muſt not therefore wonder, that the Chaldee [c] Paraphraſt interprets the paſſage, as if the Prophet himſelf was the perſon ſent.

This interpretation has been adopted, probably without much conſideration, by a [d] learned writer, whoſe comment, in connection with that of [e] another learned member of our Church, extends to the whole of the Old Teſtament, and is in common uſe among us.

[a] John i. 1. Rom. ix. 5, &c. [b] Rev. i. 8.

[c] The Chaldee Paraphraſt concludes his interpretation of the text with inſerting לאתנבאה, "to propheſy," ſo as to render the laſt words "hath ſent me to propheſy to "thee."

[d] Lowth. [e] Patrick.

I ſay,

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I ſay, probably without much conſideration, becauſe in ſo doing he contradicts himſelf. For, in the [f]parallel paſſage of Iſaiah, he confidently aſſerts, that Chriſt, and not the Prophet, is the perſon ſent, in oppoſition to the Chaldee Paraphraſt; and [g]refers, in confirmation of his comment on that paſſage, to this very text in Zechariah, which he notwithſtanding explains afterwards in ſo different a ſenſe.

In conſequence however of ſuch degrading interpretations, the text appears lately to have been overlooked or diſregarded. The generality of readers appear to have acquieſced in a confuſed kind of perſuaſion, that the Prophet is the perſon ſent: and not a ſingle obſervation with regard to this perſon has been made by the learned [h]author of the New Tranſlation of the Minor Prophets.

But whatever deference may thus have lately been ſhewn to the Chaldee Paraphraſt, no ſuch attention was paid to his interpretation of the paſſage before us by learned writers of the Chriſtian Church in former ages.

[f] Iſ. xlviii. 16.

[g] Though Lowth refers to verſes 10 and 11 only of the text; yet in his comment on thoſe verſes he explains, "who was the perſon ſent," by referring to the preceding verſe; ſo that his reference from Iſ. xlviii. 16. may be conſidered as made to the whole text.

[h] Dr. Newcome, now Primate of Ireland.

Jerome

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Jerome and Theodoret, in their reſpective comments, explicitly and excluſively conſider the Lord of Hoſts, mentioned in the beginning of the text, as the Perſon ſent. Their words are ſo full and pointed, as to deſerve the moſt particular attention. On the firſt verſe of the text Jerome remarks, "Vox Sal-"vatoris loquentis inducitur, qui omnipotens "Deus a Patre omnipotente miſſum ſe eſſe "dicit." And again, in [i] another part of his works, he cites the two laſt verſes, and thus explains them, "Hæc dicit Dominus miſſus "a Domino cui nomen Omnipotens."—The comment of Theodoret alſo is not leſs deciſive, [k] "The prophet, therefore," (ſays Theodoret) "has given us to underſtand not only "that there are two Perſons, but alſo two "Perſons of the ſame rank: *For thus ſaith the* "*Lord of Hoſts, after the glory hath he ſent* "*me;* and, to ſhew who the Perſon ſending "is, he ſubjoins, *And ye ſhall know that the* "*Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me:* therefore both "the Perſon ſending is Lord of Hoſts, and the

[i] See Works, vol. iv. p. 132. edit. Par. 1624.

[k] "Υπεδειξε τοινυν (ſays Theodoret) ἡμιν ὁ προφητης ου "μονον την δυαδα των προσωπων, αλλα και το ὁμοτιμον των "προσωπων· ταδε γαρ λεγει κυριος παντοκρατωρ, οπισω δοξης "απεσταλκε με. Και δεικνυς τις ὁ αποστειλας επαγει· και γνω-"σεσθε ὁτι κυριος παντοκρατωρ απεσταλκε με. Τοιγαρουν και ὁ "αποστειλας κυριος παντοκρατωρ, και ὁ αποσταλεις κυριος παντο-"κρατωρ, και ουδεμια αξιωματων διαφορα."

"Perſon

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" Perſon ſent is Lord of Hoſts, and there is " no difference of dignity between them."

I might produce citations alſo to the ſame effect from the learned comment of Cyril, Biſhop of Alexandria.

Nor are Commentators the only writers of thoſe early ages, from whom ſuch citations may be produced. Athanaſius himſelf ſays expreſsly, in his treatiſe " On the Trinity and " the Holy Spirit," which is ſtill extant in the Latin tranſlation, [l] " Omnipotens autem " Filius Dei de quo Zecharias ait: *Propterea* " *ſic dicit Dominus Omnipotens, poſt gloriam* " *miſit me.*" St. Auguſtine alſo, having ſpoken of the parallel paſſage in Iſaiah, [m] ſays, " Eſt " et alius locus apud Zechariam, qui hoc " evidenter oſtendit, quod Omnipotentem mi- " ſit Omnipotens. Quis quem, niſi Deus Pa- " ter Deum Filium? Nam ita ſcriptum eſt: " *Hæc enim dicit Dominus Omnipotens, poſt* " *gloriam miſit me.*"

To theſe diſtinguiſhed writers of the early ages may be added Vatablus, Caſtalio, Druſius, and [n] other eminent critics in later times,

[l] See Athanaſius's Works, vol. ii. p. 978. edit. Par. 1698.

[m] De Civitate Dei, lib. xx. c. 30.

[n] No one of thoſe whoſe expoſitions of Scripture are collected in the " Critici Sacri" appears to entertain a ſuſpicion that the Prophet is the perſon ſent.

Even

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who are unanimous in declaring, that the perſon who was ſent is not the Prophet, but the Meſſiah. Indeed we find it expreſsly declared by them, that the Lord of Hoſts and Perſon ſent in the beginning of the paſſage is Chriſt; and that the ſame appellation, when repeated at the concluſion, points out the Father as the Perſon ſending.

Upon the concurrent ſupport of theſe, and (as I might add) of all the diſtinguiſhed [n] Theologians of antiquity, whoſe opinion on the ſubject can at preſent be aſcertained, I might with confidence reſt the explanation of the text: eſpecially too, as, in the very middle and moſt exalted part of it, Jehovah ſays, with manifeſt reference to his being ſent, "Lo! "I come:" "Sing and rejoice, O daughter "of Zion: for lo! I come, and I will dwell "in the midſt of thee, ſaith Jehovah. And "many nations ſhall be joined to Jehovah in "that day, and ſhall be my people:" and then, as if to preclude all poſſible doubt that the Perſon ſent is Jehovah, who ſays to the daughter of Zion, "Lo! I come," the ſpeaker not

Even Grotius ſuppoſes, that the perſon who was ſent is not the Prophet, but Michael. Menochius, who lived nearly at the ſame time with Grotius, calls him Gabriel.

[n] Rabbi David Kimchi himſelf refers to the Meſſiah, Zech. ii. 10. 11. See Allix's Judgment of the Jewiſh Church againſt the Unitarians, p. 37. Lond. 1699.

only

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only repeats, what was connected with it, "and I will dwell in the midſt of thee;" but changing the number concludes, "and thou," not "ye," (as it ſtands in the ninth verſe,) that is, "thou daughter of Zion, ſhalt know "that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto "thee."

But I mean not to reſt my explanation of the text upon human authority ſolely; neither ſhall I dwell upon the very powerful ſupport that I might derive from the parallel paſſage in the 48th chapter of Iſaiah, and which, not only the learned commentator above contraſted with himſelf, but alſo his immediate [o] deſcendant and great ſucceſſor in the illuſtration of Iſaiah, refers expreſsly to Chriſt. For this paſſage, as well as the text, has been otherwiſe interpreted by the Chaldee Paraphraſt. I ſhall therefore not dwell upon it; but endeavour,—after an obſervation or two upon the language uſed by the ſpeaker in the text,—to confirm and enforce the explanation here given of it by three ſimilar paſſages in the Prophecy of Zechariah; which are all totally miſinterpreted in the new tranſlation of the Minor Prophets, and which muſt be vindicated, as they ſtand in our Engliſh Bible, before it can be expected that their authority

[o] Biſhop Lowth.

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and application to our ſubject ſhould be fully admitted. Afterwards I ſhall conclude with a few obſervations upon the whole.

To eſtabliſh a doctrine of ſo great importance as that which is deduced from the text, it is exceedingly deſirable, in the firſt place, that the language of the paſſage ſhould be clear and determinate. And what language can be more ſo, as far as relates to the perſon of the ſpeaker, than thoſe remarkable words, with which the text begins? "For thus ſaith "the Lord of Hoſts; After the [p] Glory hath he "ſent me." Whom can theſe words permit

[p] In ſpeaking of the language of the text, it might be urged, that verſe the 8th, with which the text commences, is connected with the preceding part of the chapter by the illative particle "for;" that the word "Glory," mentioned in this verſe, refers to the ſame word in verſe the 5th; and that after Jehovah has declared, in the 5th verſe, "he will be Glory in the midſt of Jeruſalem," the ſame divine Perſon proceeds in the 8th verſe to declare, "For thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, After the Glory hath "he ſent me:" and from thence it might immediately be inferred, that the Perſon ſent was the ſame Jehovah, who, it was before ſaid, ſhould "be Glory in the midſt of "Jeruſalem." But though ſuch a conſtruction of the paſſage, as far as relates to the word "Glory," is not without advocates of very great name; yet as this explanation, no leſs than every other which has been given of the word, is attended with difficulties, I wiſh to leave its meaning undecided, and to draw no other argument from the text itſelf, than what reſults from the obvious conſtruction of the other parts of it.

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us to underſtand by "me," except the Lord of Hoſts? The ſubſequent language alſo correſponds with this and no other interpretation: "I will ſhake mine hand upon them," ſays the ſpeaker, "and they ſhall be a ſpoil to their ſervants." Could this be the Prophet's hand?—It is the hand of Jehovah himſelf, and of the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, which is ſaid, in one paſſage of Iſaiah, to be ſhaken [q] over the river; and in another, over [r] Egypt: and no where elſe (except in the text) is the [s] ſame form of expreſſion uſed in holy Writ.

And again the text proceeds, "Lo! I "come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith Jehovah. And many nations "ſhall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and "ſhall be my people; and I will dwell in the "midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that "the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto thee." Can any part of this be ſeparated from the reſt, and referred to the Prophet? Or can there be a doubt, from the conſtruction and connection of the whole text, that the ſame Perſon both ſpeaks throughout, and ſays, in the concluſion, that he was ſent: eſpecially alſo, when (as I have before inſiſted) in the

[q] Iſaiah xi. 15. [r] Ibid. xix. 16.

[s] "Upon" and "over" are both expreſſed in the Hebrew by the prepoſition עַל, which, properly and agreeably to its derivation, denotes "above."

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very middle and moſt exalted part of the paſſage Jehovah ſays expreſsly, and with reference to his being ſent, "Lo! I come."

But indeed, to demonſtrate the obvious meaning of the whole, if, conſiſtently with the exalted language, any created being could be ſubſtituted, and that part aſſigned to him in the text, which is now confeſſedly ſuſtained by the Lord of Hoſts and Jehovah; it may be aſſerted, without danger of contradiction, that there would not in that caſe be a ſurmiſe of doubt, but this ſame individual Being was the ſpeaker from the beginning to the end of the text, and alſo the Perſon ſent.

Not to dwell longer therefore upon a ſubject, which is ſo incontrovertible as the literal meaning of the text, I ſhall endeavour to ſuperſede the neceſſity of looking out for any figure, or irregular change of Perſon, in it, by

[t] In the 10th and 11th verſes the ſpeaker is called Jehovah, and is ſaid to be ſent by the Lord of Hoſts. Doubtleſs I need not obſerve on this occaſion, that Jehovah is the ſame with the Lord (or Jehovah) of Hoſts, who before was the ſpeaker, and was ſaid to be ſent.—It may, however, be added, as a circumſtance worthy of obſervation, that, as in the two former verſes, the Lord of Hoſts, who was ſent, ſpeaks of another Lord of Hoſts that ſent him; ſo, in the two latter, Jehovah, who ſays, "Lo! "I come," ſpeaks of another Jehovah, ſaying, that "many nations ſhall be joined to Jehovah in that day, "and ſhall be my people."

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proceeding to confirm the literal conſtruction by other paſſages in the writings of the ſame Prophet.

The paſſages, which I am to uſe for this purpoſe, and which I am alſo to vindicate as they ſtand tranſlated in our Bible, are three in number.—The firſt is found in the beginning of the third chapter, or, as it may be ſtated, in the part of Zechariah which almoſt immediately follows the text. Here we have a paſſage, which aſſerts in reality the very doctrine for which I am contending, namely, that a Perſon, called by a name peculiar to the ſupreme God, is ſent by another of the ſame name.

To prove this, I need only inſiſt upon a circumſtance, which no one will deny; that, by the *angel* of the Lord, or of Jehovah, is meant a Perſon *ſent* by the Lord, or by Jehovah; and proceed to the paſſage itſelf, which is thus tranſlated in our Engliſh Bible:—"And "he ſhewed me Joſhua the high prieſt, ſtand- "ing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan "ſtanding at his right hand to reſiſt him. "And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, The Lord "rebuke thee, O Satan."—Now that the Lord or Jehovah, who ſpake unto Satan, was a different Perſon from him who was called upon to rebuke Satan, is evident. He was unqueſtionably the angel of Jehovah before

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whom Joſhua was ſtanding. Conſequently the angel of Jehovah, or one who was ſent by Jehovah, is himſelf called Jehovah. No paſſage can be more clear in its meaning; and none can more ſatisfactorily confirm the great doctrine which is contained in the text. For the confirmation is in ſome meaſure incidental, and therefore the more convincing.

That Jehovah who ſpake unto Satan was the angel of Jehovah, mentioned in the preceding verſe, muſt have appeared indiſputable to the author of the new tranſlation; ſince his miſinterpretation of the paſſage ariſes from a wiſh to call both by the ſame name, which he accordingly does by inſerting in brackets "the angel of" before "Jehovah;" though ſuch an alteration of the paſſage muſt cut up by the roots the powerful argument, which Chriſtians from the [u] beginning have drawn from hence in proof of a plurality of Perſons in the Godhead. Admit for a moment that the alteration ought to be made, and our argument is annihilated: the angel of Jehovah, mentioned in the firſt verſe, is merely called the angel of Jehovah in the ſecond; and not, as we contend, Jehovah himſelf.

[u] Jerome and Athanaſius take particular notice of this paſſage, and apply it in vindication of our Lord's divinity. See Jerome's Comment in locum, and Athanaſius de Trinitate et Spiritu Sancto. Works, vol. ii. p. 970.

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ſelf. Doubtleſs nothing more can be neceſſary to evince a want of proper foundation for this alteration, than ſimply to ſtate, that it is made in direct oppoſition, not only to our Bible-Verſion, but alſo to every other Verſion except the Syriac, and to every Manuſcript extant.

The ſecond paſſage in Zechariah which I ſhall uſe to prove, that the term Lord of Hoſts in the text is applied both to the Perſon ſending and him who was ſent, and of which alſo I ſhall endeavour to vindicate the tranſlation given in our Bible, is found in the 7th verſe of the 13th chapter: in which the Lord of Hoſts, foretelling the ſufferings of the Redeemer, ſpeaks of him as equal to himſelf; he bids the ſword awake againſt his ſhepherd, againſt the man that is his "Fellow," or, as that term means in our tranſlation, his "Equal." The original word is עמיתי, and, excluſively of this paſſage, it is found in the Book of Leviticus only. There it is often uſed, and always ſo as to ſignify a "fellow-citizen," or "one "upon the ſame level in ſociety." It appears therefore with the greateſt propriety to be rendered in our Bible by the term "Fel-"low."

But this term, expreſſive as it is of the real meaning of the original word, and reſpected as it ought to be from its neceſſary reference

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to the divine nature of our Redeemer, is entirely excluded both in expreſſion and ſubſtance from the new tranſlation, which gives the paſſage thus: "Awake, O ſword, againſt "my ſhepherd, and againſt the man who "is near unto me, ſaith Jehovah *God* of "Hoſts."

Now though the word לעמת, which from its common acceptation may be conſidered as a prepoſition, ſignifies "juxta" or "proxime "ad;" and though עמית ſhould be rendered from thence "proximus;" [x] "non eſt," as we may infer with different commentators from the uſe of this noun itſelf, "proprie quivis "proximus, ſed intime familiaris, nobis con-"junctus quodam jure." For unqueſtionably, as we find our noun itſelf very frequently uſed in Leviticus, we ought to determine its meaning from thence, and not from any paſſage or paſſages in which the prepoſition only is concerned. In Leviticus the meaning of the noun is obvious; [y] "Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou ſhalt in any "wiſe rebuke" את עמיתך "thy neighbour:" "And if thou ſell ought" [z] לעמיתך "to thy "neighbour, or buyeſt ought" מיד עמיתך "of thy neighbour's hand, ye ſhall not op-

[x] See Poole's Synopſis in loc.

[y] Lev. xix. 17. [z] Ibid. xxv. 14.

"preſs

"preſs one another;" or, as the original words ſignify, "every man his brother." "Ye "ſhall not ſteal, neither deal falſely, neither "lie" [a] איש בעמיתו "one to another: Ye "ſhall not oppreſs" [b] איש את עמיתו "one "another." In theſe paſſages, and indeed in all the others in which the noun is uſed, its meaning is obviouſly ſuch, as to juſtify the explanation which I have above given of it; and alſo to confirm the derivation aſſigned to it by Schultens from an Arabic word, which ſignifies [c] "glomerare, ſeu potius filum filo "ſimili intorquere;" "unde" (as Simonis remarks) "ad ſimilitudinem et interiorem pro- "portionem metaphora facta, quemadmodum "συγκλωστον proprie glomeratum apud Græcos "transfertur ad ſimilia et æqualia, quæ ejuſ- "dem ſunt generis et naturæ."

The Septuagint-Tranſlators, from the ſame want perhaps of [d] proper conception concern-

[a] Lev. xix. 11. [b] Ibid. xxv. 17.

[c] See the word עמית in Simonis's Hebrew Lexicon.

[d] In the Preface to King James's Bible, errors are aſcribed to the Seventy, and ſome to their ignorance: "They (the Seventy) did many things well; but yet, "as men, they ſtumbled and fell; one while through "overſight, another while through ignorance; yea, "ſometimes they may be noted to add to the original, "and ſometimes to take from it; which made the Apo- "ſtles to leave them many times when they left the He- "brew, and to deliver the ſenſe thereof according to the "truth

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ing the different Perſons in the Godhead, which has before been attributed to the Chaldee Paraphraſt, have indeed rendered the term in queſtion "πολιτην," or "Citizen." And from thence others may have been induced to lower down its meaning: yet even the Chaldee Paraphraſt has it, "Socium ejus qui "eſt ſimilis ei;" and the Arabic Tranſlator, aware that a connection of intimacy and equality was intended, though tranſlating from the Septuagint, expreſſes it "Fellow-Citizen:" Aquila alſo renders it from the original "Συμ- "φυλετην," "One of the ſame tribe or ward;" and the Vulgate "Cohærentem mihi;" which Jerome explains by referring to our Saviour's declaration, "Ego in Patre et Pater in me;" [d] others by ſaying that it is to be underſtood, "Conſubſtantialiter ſecundum divinam natu- "ram, et hypoſtatice ſecundum humanam;" and again, [e] others by making it ſignify not only "Conjunctum," but alſo "Coæqualem "quatenus Deus eſt."

I need not inſiſt that the word "near" in the new tranſlation conveys not the moſt diſtant idea of equality between the ſpeaker and the Perſon of whom he was ſpeaking:

"truth of the word, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Fol. p. 3.

[d] See Poole's Synopſis.

[e] See Menochius's Comment.

and

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and ſhall only add, that, though the new tranſlation thus degrades, and, if I may ſo ſay, entirely annihilates, the awful ſenſe ſo juſtly aſcribed to the term "עמיתי," we have, in the appendix ſubjoined to it, Archbiſhop Secker's interpretation of the term, who ſays expreſsly, that "it ſeems to mean, a perſon "ſtanding upon the ſame level in ſociety."

The third and laſt paſſage, to which I ſhall appeal in ſupport of the doctrine aſcribed to the text, and of which I am alſo to vindicate the Bible-Tranſlation, is found in the 10th verſe of the 12th chapter of Zechariah: "And "I will pour out upon the houſe of David "and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem the "ſpirit of grace and ſupplications, and they "ſhall look upon me whom they have "pierced."

That the ſpeaker here is Jehovah, is evident, becauſe he is the ſpeaker through the whole of the chapter, and becauſe no other could pour upon man the ſpirit of grace and ſupplications. The only queſtion then is, whether the paſſage be genuine, as it ſtands in the copy from which our Bible is tranſlated, and it ought to be rendered, "look "upon me;" or we are to give up at once all poſſibility of drawing any argument from it in ſupport of our bleſſed Saviour's divinity, and

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and render it, with the new tranſlation, "look "upon him."

The Hebrew copy, from which our Bible-Tranſlation is made, reſts in this paſſage upon the [f]authority not only of the greateſt part, but alſo of the moſt valuable, of the Hebrew manuſcripts; upon that of all the ancient verſions, including, as far as can be proved by inference, thoſe of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion; and upon the united authority even of the moſt [g]virulent enemies of Chriſtianity.

On the contrary, it is urged, that St. John, in his [h]Goſpel and Book of [i]Revelation, has "look upon him;" and that ſome of the Fathers, and many manuſcripts, ſupport the ſame reading.

[f] See De-Roſſi's Variæ Lectiones Vet. Teſt. in loc.

[g] Among other arguments againſt the adoption of the reading, "look upon him," De-Roſſi urges: "Non modo "plerique ac meliores codices ab hac corruptione im-"munes ſunt, ſed et ex tot ſcriptoribus antichriſtianis, "quos legi ac magno numero poſſideo, ne unus quidem "eſt, quod ſciam, qui objicientibus Chriſtianis Zachariæ "prophetiam, reſpondeat Zachariæ textum eſſe את, nul-"lus qui vel ſolam opponat vel memoret, codicum varie-"tatem. את aperte et ſine ullo alterius lectionis indicio "legunt præſertim acerrimi Chriſtianorum hoſtes Lip-"mannus," &c. &c.

[h] John xix. 37. [i] Rev. i. 7.

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Now it is the opinion of [k] learned men that the elliptical form of expreſſion, found in the Greek of the paſſage which is urged from St. John's Goſpel, "εις ὁν εξεκεντησαν," leaves ſtrong doubts concerning the antecedent to "ὁν" in the original Hebrew from which it was tranſlated.—And whoever conſiders the words of Zechariah, which are uſed in the paſſage referred to in the Book of Revelation, will ſee at once, that they are not introduced as a citation; and that, adapted as they were to the other parts of the 5th, 6th, and 7th

[k] See the latter part of De-Roſſi's Obſervations on Zech. xii. 10.—When Jerome, in his Epiſtle to Pammachius, ſays that St. John cites this paſſage of Zechariah, "juxta Hebraicam veritatem," and afterwards that St. John's and his own tranſlation differ; he probably means that they differ in the form of expreſſion only, not in having been made from Hebrew copies, of which one read "look upon him," and the other "upon me;" as Jerome neither mentions this important difference, nor could he have intended to recede himſelf from that "Hebraica veritas" which he admits in St. John's citation.

This alſo appears ſtill more probable from Jerome's Comment on this paſſage.—Having there diſcuſſed the queſtion, whether "whom they have pierced," or "whom they have inſulted," is the proper reading, he ſpeaks of St. John's attention to the Hebrew more fully and pointedly than in his Epiſtle to Pammachius; and, without the moſt diſtant intimation that St. John did not read "אלי," he himſelf adopts this reading, and tranſlates the paſſage "look upon me."

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verſes, they could not be ſpoken of Chriſt otherwiſe than in the third perſon.

Beſides, excluſively of all ſuch conſiderations, it is well known, with reſpect not only to the Evangeliſts, but alſo to the Fathers, that they often cite the general ſenſe of a paſſage without attending to the particular perſon of whom it is ſpoken, when their argument depends not upon ſuch attention.—Thus the Prophet Malachi ſays, "Behold "I will ſend my meſſenger, and he ſhall "prepare the way before me:" and though [h] St. Matthew and [i] St. Mark, [k] Tertullian and [l] Chryſoſtom, referring to this paſſage, all uſe the words, "before thee;" yet no one doubts that the original reading is, "before "me." The author of the new tranſlation himſelf appears not to doubt it, however he may endeavour in his obſervations on this paſſage to preclude the [m] inference which ought to be drawn from thence, that our bleſſed Saviour is "Lord of Hoſts."

[h] Matt. xi. 10. [i] Mark i. 2.

[k] Tertullian ſays, "Ecce ego mitto angelum meum "ante faciem tuam, id eſt Chriſti, qui præparabit viam "tuam ante te." Adv. Jud. p. 194.

[l] Chryſoſtom alſo ſays, Ιδου αποστελλω τον αγγελον μου προ προσωπου σου ὁς κατασκευασει την ὁδον σου εμπροσθεν σου. Works, edit. Montfaucon, vol. vii. p. 415.

[m] See on Mal. iii. 1. Allix's Judgment, &c. p. 303.

That

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That different manuſcripts ſhould favour the contrary reading, is an objection which we ſhall not be diſpoſed to receive with alarm, if we either admit with De-Roſſi, that the Jews corrupted the paſſage from attention to the analogy of conſtruction; or, with others, that this is one of the eighteen paſſages which the Maſſorah in ſeveral places confeſſeth were fraudulently altered by the Scribes; which latter opinion the alteration of a [o] paſſage of ſimilar meaning in the Pſalms tends immediately to confirm; and beſides it is ſtrenuouſly maintained by Biſhop Pearſon, who [p] ſays that it appears from the direct confeſſion of a Jew to Mercerus.

Whoever therefore conſiders the ſatisfactory manner, in which the objections to the eſtabliſhed reading may be anſwered, ought not for a moment to ſuffer them to weigh againſt the very ſuperior arguments which may be [q] accumulated in its defence: much leſs ought he to think himſelf juſtifiable in ſubmitting at once to the obliteration of a reading, which has ever been deemed by the moſt learned men, both in [r] ancient and [s] mo-

[o] Pſ. xxii. 17.

[p] See Pearſon on the Creed, fol. p. 201. 5th edit.

[q] See De-Roſſi in loc. [r] See Theodoret in loc.

[s] See Bp. Pearſon on the Creed, as above, p. 201. Allix ſays, "We cannot have a better proof that the Meſ-

"ſias

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dern times, an irrefragable proof of the Divinity of our great Redeemer.—So fully may our Bible-Tranſlation be defended in this, no leſs than the two other paſſages of Zechariah, by which I was to ſupport the literal interpretation of the text.

And when, in addition to the arguments which may be urged from human authority and from the parallel paſſage of Iſaiah in favour of this interpretation, we find it confirmed, not only by the language of the text itſelf, but alſo by the three diſtinguiſhed paſſages of the ſame Prophecy which I have been citing and vindicating; I truſt I ſhall not ſpeak without the conviction and approbation of my audience, when I aſſert, that the text ought not to be conſtrued in any other, than its obvious and literal ſenſe, and that the ſpeaker in it is at the ſame time both Lord of Hoſts and the Perſon [t] ſent.

" ſias ſhould be Jehovah, than Zech. xii. 10. which the " Targum alſo interprets of the Meſſias." Judgment, &c. p. 284.

[t] The ſame words, which are twice uſed in the text concerning the perſon ſent, " and ye" (the Jews) " ſhall," or " thou" (the daughter of Zion) " ſhalt, know that the " Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me," are uſed alſo in Zech. iv. 9. and vi. 15. Leſt therefore the uſe of them in theſe other paſſages ſhould be thought capable of being converted into an objection againſt the interpretation here given of the text; it may be proper, before I quit the ſubject,

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No four paſſages in any one of the inſpired books can more immediately ſupport each other, or more fully evince a plurality of perſons in the Godhead, than the text and the other three paſſages of Zechariah, which I have ſo often brought before you. But though they moſt powerfully ſupport each other, it by no means follows from thence, that they muſt ſtand or fall together in the confirmation which they yield to the great doctrine deduced from them concerning the perſons of the Godhead. Any one of them might be ſufficient to confirm this doctrine independently of all the others. Such therefore is their importance, even taken ſeparately, that to have reſcued but one of them from inattention or miſinterpretation, would be an ample recompence for any degree of pains and exertion.

It has been remarked, that few things are more evidently injurious to the cauſe of revealed religion, than the weak and unfounded

ſubject, to remark, firſt, that it is by no means certain, either from the context or from the expoſitions of commentators, that they are ſpoken of the Prophet in Zech. iv. 9. and vi. 15: and ſecondly, that if this was certain, it would not follow from thence that they muſt be ſpoken of him alſo in the text, which begins with an expreſs declaration from the Lord of Hoſts, "that he himſelf "was ſent," and, in its progreſs, makes him ſay, under the name of Jehovah, "Lo! I come."

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arguments, uſed by many of its injudicious friends with a wiſh to defend or to illuſtrate its truth. While I admit the juſtice and full force of this remark, the preceding obſervations neceſſarily ſuggeſt and evince, that we may find, in the liberality of modern conceſſion, an oppoſite extreme, not leſs to be dreaded and oppoſed.

I ſpeak not of conceſſions, which proceed from an indifference to all religion, and which often obtrude themſelves upon us; but of thoſe, which we find, and particularly with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, in the writings of men diſtinguiſhed by their piety and zeal for Chriſtianity; who, becauſe they ſee the imprudence of ſtraining texts of the Old Teſtament to make them bear upon this doctrine, paſs haſtily on to the oppoſite extreme, and employ all their learning and ingenuity to explain away the meaning of others which obviouſly and neceſſarily ſupport it; who not only give up every argument of the kind, which is allowed by the generality of learned Chriſtians to be inconcluſive, but alſo feel no difficulty in expunging from their Bible readings, which a very great majority of the orthodox defenders of our religion have ever thought unanſwerably deciſive in their favour.—To ſay that this has been done in modern times, would be to aſſert merely what I truſt

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I truſt (as far as the preſent attempt was to extend) has already been proved.

But, while I truſt that this has been the caſe, I cannot refrain from inſiſting, that to be under a neceſſity to bring forward proofs of ſuch a nature, [x] before we can avail ourſelves of thoſe paſſages of Scripture, to which we have been accuſtomed to appeal without reſerve in our Bible-Tranſlation, is to be placed in a very undeſirable ſituation.—But the importance of the paſſages, which I have been vindicating, ought to ſtimulate our exertions; and to make us ſubmit, however reluctantly, to this neceſſity.

Great is the conſolation, which believers may derive from theſe paſſages when properly interpreted and enforced. Every where therefore ought they to be held up to view and vindicated. But beſides, in this place, bad conſequences of the moſt extenſive nature muſt ariſe from indifference or ſilence on ſuch occaſions.

In the purſuit of theological knowledge, the young ſtudent, on whom the faith of thouſands may depend, is always directed to apply for inſtruction, concerning difficult or dif-

[x] When the author appealed to different paſſages of Zechariah, in the two Sermons which he publiſhed on the Trinity, he had not at that time read any part of the new Tranſlation of the Minor Prophets.

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puted paſſages of Scripture, to tranſlations and comments. And, ſo prevalent is the averſion to laborious reſearch in the preſent times, it is much to be feared, that the greater part will content themſelves with applying to modern writings of both theſe deſcriptions, rather than ſubmit to the fatigue of following the ancients in their learned and elaborate inveſtigations and diſplays of divine truth.

Among theſe modern productions, "The "attempt towards an improved verſion— "and an explanation of the Twelve Minor "Prophets" will certainly not eſcape their attention.

In ſuch hands therefore, the greater the general excellency of any work, the more reſpectable the character of its author, and the more elevated his rank; the more ſerious and laſting danger is to be apprehended from ſuch miſinterpretations of important parts of Scripture, as have above been ſubjected to your conſideration. For, in tranſlations of Scripture, the tranſlator does not merely give an opinion, but he decides abſolutely; he alters the text itſelf of holy Writ: and thus, if he decides wrong, he poiſons the ſources of theological information, he digs up the very foundations on which the ſuperſtructure of a ſound and orthodox faith muſt ever be raiſed.

However undeſirable therefore it may be

to

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to be called upon thus to vindicate our Bible-Tranſlation, the employment itſelf, which is every where an obvious duty, becomes in this place a duty of the moſt extenſive importance.

God grant that the vindication here attempted of the true meaning both of the text, and of the three important paſſages by which it is confirmed, may tend to eſtabliſh and comfort us in the belief of the great myſtery of the Holy Trinity; and may induce us, in all our ſcriptural inquiries, firſt, to regard with veneration the excellent tranſlation of the ſacred Scriptures which our Bible exhibits; and then to decide concerning ſuch important paſſages in it, as may be thought capable of an improved expoſition, by the only means of deciſion, which we can with confidence adopt, where modern interpreters, notwithſtanding all their advantages, diſagree, and Scripture admits of different conſtructions; namely, by a laborious and patient examination into the writings of the moſt learned men of antiquity, and into the ſupport which the paſſages in queſtion derive from other and ſimilar parts of holy Writ!

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APPENDIX.

As Dr. Blayney, the Regius Profeſſor of Hebrew, has ſubjoined to his new tranſlation of Zechariah an Appendix, in reply to various paſſages of the preceding Sermon, it is incumbent upon me to return ſome anſwer, leſt it ſhould be inferred that I have nothing to urge in vindication of my own interpretation of them.

I muſt previouſly however remark, that he by no means attempts to defend even the greater part of the poſitions which are controverted in my Sermon; that he gives up thoſe of the Chaldee Paraphraſt and Lowth, concerning the text, or the firſt of my four paſſages, and thoſe of the Primate concerning the ſecond and fourth; and that I might hold myſelf excuſed from paying attention to the new poſitions, from which he argues againſt my concluſions. But as I am convinced theſe concluſions are defenſible againſt all the arguments which he advances, and as I intend at preſent never more to reſume the ſubject, I ſhall wave the advantage which I might take, and proceed to conſider the whole of the Appendix.

In oppoſition to the citations which are adduced to ſupport my conſtruction of the text, it is propoſed in the Appendix to ſet wholly aſide the authority of ancient Commentators and Fathers of the early ages.

To this I can by no means conſent. Ought we, with reſpect even to any individual among them, to place dependence in no caſe upon his opinion, becauſe we cannot univerſally depend upon it? And can we then, becauſe each individual among them may ſeparately have erred, think ourſelves juſtifiable "in "ſetting wholly aſide their authority," in a caſe where they all agree in their interpretation, and where they

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certainly are not chargeable with any of [a] "thoſe "groſs miſtakes, and notorious miſtranſlations," for which their authority is to be annihilated? If ſuch concluſions are to be admitted, we ought at once to give up all deference to the judgment of others. For where is the man, whether ancient or modern, how ſuperior ſoever his abilities, and how eminent ſoever his learning, who has not erred even groſsly? And, moreover, the ſacred interpreters, to whom I appeal, are not all to be conſidered as ancient Commentators and early Fathers: among them are to be found ſome of the moſt eminent Critics of later ages.

In explaining the words of the text, Dr. B. depends principally upon the obſervations which he introduces concerning the angel by whom they were delivered. This is a ſubject upon which I did not at all enter. Beſides, he by no means correctly ſtates by whom they were actually delivered. What is ſaid in his Appendix to be [b] "as clear as clear can "be" appears to me, and muſt appear to every one who [c] conſiders the ſubject with attention, in a totally different light. To me it appears moſt evident, that the actual deliverer of the text, or [d] "the im-"mediate ſpeaker," is not, as Dr. B. contends, "the "angel to whom another angel has given orders;" but an angel who was acting in a much higher capacity; he is the perſon who is called "another "angel," and was himſelf giving orders to the angel who talked with Zechariah.

The truth is, in the delivery of the text to the Jews, three perſons were to be concerned; the angel who firſt communicated it; an angel who received it from him; and Zechariah to whom this latter an-

[a] App. p. 79. [b] App. p. 80.
[c] See from ver. 3. to the end of Zech. ii.
[d] App. p. 80.

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gel before talked, and to whom he was to convey the information he received.

The Chaldee Paraphraſt and Lowth, againſt whom my obſervations were directed, conſider the laſt, or the Prophet, as the perſon who delivers the text; Dr. B. aſcribes the delivery to the ſecond; but the actual deliverer of it, or the immediate ſpeaker, is the firſt. This muſt be ſeen *at once* on a peruſal of the paſſage in Zechariah. The only real difficulty diſcovers itſelf when we attempt to aſcertain who this firſt perſon is.

It is certain however here, that the ſecond chapter of Zechariah, from which the text is taken, is connected with the firſt; as it opens with the introduction of a man with the line in his hand to meaſure Jeruſalem, which it was before [e] expreſsly ſaid ſhould be ſtretched forth upon it. And it is no leſs certain alſo, that in the firſt chapter a great perſon, who is [f] called Jehovah and the Lord of Hoſts, not only employs, in the conveyance of information to the Prophet, the ſame angel that is uſed for this purpoſe by the immediate ſpeaker in the text; but alſo the information itſelf is exactly of the [g] ſame kind, with reſpect both to the denunciation of God's diſpleaſure againſt the enemies of Jeruſalem, and the future proſperity of Zion. The only difference in the conveyance of this information from them is, that in the firſt chapter Jehovah is merely ſaid to have communicated [h] "good words and comfortable words," leaving it to the angel who talked with the Prophet to give them at full length; whereas, in the ſecond, the great perſon, who is called "another angel," himſelf delivers at full [i] length the information, which he orders the angel who talked with the Prophet to

[e] Zech. i. 16. [f] Ver. 12, 13.
[g] Compare Zech. i. 15—17. with Zech. ii. 8—11.
[h] Ver. 13.
[i] See from ver. 3. to the end of the chapter.

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convey to him. Theſe circumſtances are beſides the more worthy of our notice, ſince even Lowth himſelf [k] inſiſts that Jehovah or the Lord of Hoſts, who is deſcribed as acting thus in the firſt chapter, is, in that very chapter, called alſo "an angel."

We might ſafely therefore infer, that the Perſon, called Jehovah or Lord of Hoſts, and alſo an angel in the firſt chapter, is the ſame with him who is called another angel in the ſecond.—But whether we actually drew this inference or not, we may aſſert with confidence, that the perſon, thus called another angel, gave orders (contrary to the aſſertion of Dr. B.) to the angel who talked with the Prophet in the text, and directed him to deliver the whole, agreeably to the opinion maintained by the great theologians of former ages, in the name of the Lord of Hoſts, as *ſent* by the Father; or, to uſe the term which Lowth himſelf ſays was applied to him in the preceding chapter, as his *angel*.

Dr. B. indeed aſſerts, that the angel who delivers the text repeats it partly in his own words, and partly in the words of the Lord of Hoſts. But his [l] diſtri-

[k] Lowth ſays, on ver. 12, "The angel, mentioned ver. 9, "makes his ſupplication to the ſuperior angel, ver. 8, 10.; who "was indeed the Logos or Son of God, being called by the name "of Jehovah here," &c.

[l] Zech. ii. 8—11. is thus tranſlated by Dr. B.

8. For thus hath Jehovah of Hoſts ſaid,
Sending me after the glory
Unto the nations that ſpoiled you,
"Surely he that touched you hath touched the apple of "his eye."
9. For behold I am about to wave my hand over them,
And they ſhall be a ſpoil to their ſervants.
And ye ſhall know that Jehovah of Hoſts hath ſent me.
10. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Sion,
For, "Behold I am coming,
"And I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith Jehovah.
11. "And many nations ſhall be joined
"Unto Jehovah in that day,
"And ſhall become a people unto me;

"And

bution of it between them is ſanctioned by no authority; and the interpretation of the original language, by which it is ſupported, appears to be itſelf by no means well founded. For the conſtruction by which שלחני is rendered *ſending me*, is propoſed in oppoſition to every other verſion no leſs than to the Hebrew punctuation. Beſides, there appears to be no reaſon why כי, which is rendered "For" at the beginning of the text, ſhould be made to ſignify "Surely" immediately afterwards; or why ו ſhould be rendered at the concluſion "Then," and not, as before, ſimply "And."—Doubtleſs it muſt be allowed, that preceding tranſlators knew all the ſignifications of theſe particles, on which ſo much is now made to depend: and yet no tranſlator, even if we include the learned Primate himſelf, has ever before aſſigned to them in this paſſage the different ſenſes, in which Dr. B. here uſes them.

I am alſo not in the leaſt diſpoſed to ſubſcribe to the inference, which we are left to draw from the ſentence which cloſes in his Appendix the obſervations upon Zech. ii. 8—11. "There is indeed good "reaſon to believe that no part of the revelation of "the Old Teſtament was delivered through the im"mediate miniſtry of the Son of God, ſince that is "cited as the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the "Goſpel diſpenſation. Heb. i. 1, 2."

In theſe two firſt verſes of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews the author ſpeaks of the immediate communication of the will of God to the Jews through the Prophets, and to Chriſtians through his Son: but he

"And I will dwell in the midſt of thee."
Then ſhalt thou know that Jehovah of Hoſts hath ſent me unto thee.

How far either this tranſlation, or the arbitrary appropriation of its different parts to the different ſpeakers, who are diſtinguiſhed by the inverted commas, appears to be natural, or juſt, every reader muſt determine for himſelf.

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by no means ſays, or inſinuates, either that God did not employ his Son to make known his will to the Prophets, before they communicated it to the Jews, or that the Son was not actually ſent to the Prophets and others, both to declare and to execute his Father's will. Biſhop Bull very fully aſſerts, [m] "Ubi-"cunque non merum angelum ſed ipſum Deum ap-"paruiſſe liquet, ibi non Patrem ſed Filium intelli-"gendum eſſe primævæ antiquitatis conſentiens ju-"dicium religioſe ſequentes conſtanter affirmamus."

As to Zech. iii. 2. which is the ſecond paſſage I attempt to vindicate, or the firſt of thoſe which I uſe to confirm my explanation of the text; the two ſuppoſitions, as Dr. B. calls them, which he [n] ſays "ap-"pear but very problematical even at the beſt," and "loſe even the ſhadow of probability when we "render יגער in the future," muſt have been aſſumed as "evident and unqueſtionable" by the learned Primate, on whoſe tranſlation my obſervations were made; otherwiſe he could not poſſibly have introduced "the angel of" before Jehovah: nor can I at preſent ſee any reaſon for rejecting them. I have [o] already ſpoke concerning the repetition of the word Jehovah, Zech. ii 11.

Little or nothing is ſaid in Dr. B's Appendix concerning the third paſſage by way of reply to the authorities, upon which I have aſſigned a meaning to the noun עמיתי different from what belongs to the prepoſition לעמת, upon a ſuppoſition that both have the ſame origin. It is therefore hardly neceſſary for me to add, in vindication of this difference of meaning, that the two words are not even derived from the ſame root by Simonis in his new and very valuable Hebrew Lexicon. To preclude the inference which is drawn from Zech. xiii. 7. in ſupport of our Saviour's equality with the Father, Dr. B. declares,

[m] Bulli Fid. Nic. Def. Sect. 4. c. 3. §. 16.
[n] App. p. 81. [o] See note p. 386.

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[p] "he is fully perſuaded the Redeemer is not meant, "and his ſufferings not ſpoken of in this place." The contrary opinion is founded, on a direct [q] application of this Prophecy by our Saviour himſelf, to his own ſufferings. If this is not to be numbered among the paſſages, of which our Saviour is made to ſay by another Evangeliſt, [r] "all things muſt be ful- "filled which were written in the law of Moſes and "in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms concerning me," how can we ever aſcertain what thoſe paſſages are?

The ground upon which the Bible-Tranſlation of the laſt paſſage, or Zech. xii. 10. muſt now be defended, is totally changed. Dr. B. confeſſes, [s] "Were "the matter to be decided by the number and "weight of authorities, I am of opinion with De- "Roſſi, that the ſcale would turn in favour of אלי;" or againſt אליו. But, I doubt not, Dr. B.'s new poſt will be found in the end as untenable, as that which the learned Primate occupied.

Deſirous to reconcile אלי to St. John's citation, De-Roſſi conjectured, with Caluſius, that poſſibly St. John might cite from a manuſcript, which omitted the [t] את, and read [u] אלי pointed like the ſimple prepo-

[p] App. p. 82.

[q] Compare Zech. xiii. 7. with Matt. xxvi. 31.

In his Notes on Zech. xiii. 7. p. 68, Dr. B. ſays that "our Sa- "viour refers to this paſſage, as to a proverbial ſaying, (juſt as we "might do, if we had met with one to our purpoſe in any pro- "fane author,) laying it down as a matter of courſe, for *the fol- "lowers to diſperſe when their leader was taken off.*" A different explanation of our Saviour's reference might ſurely have been expected after the very juſt remark which we find in Dr. B.'s Preliminary Diſcourſe: "It muſt be acknowledged, that, next to Iſaiah, "Zechariah is the moſt evangelical of all the Prophets, having "more frequent and more clear and direct alluſions to the cha- "racter and coming of the Meſſiah, and his kingdom, than any of "the reſt." p. 15.

[r] Luke xxiv. 44. [s] Notes, p. 63.

[t] The Hebrew words, which we render, "and they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced," diveſted of their points, are והביטו אלי את אשר דקרו.

[u] Whether points were at all introduced in the Hebrew Language

fition, and thus that he might render אלי אשר "ad "quem." Dr. B. here goes beyond Calusius and supposes not only that אלי, admitting an alteration in the present punctuation, is a simple preposition, but also that it is used, as such, in this passage before את אשר. Accordingly he renders these words את אלי אשר "εις ὁν," and the whole clause, nearly as the Primate has it, "They shall look towards him whom "they pierced."

I shall say nothing of the reasons which Calusius and De-Rossi had for omitting [x] את before they offered any conjecture concerning the construction of אלי by St. John: neither shall I inquire whether they thought the Evangelist, whom they supposed to be so far left to himself, as to use a corrupted copy with respect to the omission of את, ought not to have considered the alteration, presumed in the punctuation of אלי, as erroneous, rather than the word itself, as a simple preposition; because the argument, which I have to urge on the subject, will I think effectually set aside their opinion (if it were theirs) and also Dr. B.'s, that אלי, even if we pay no attention whatsoever to the points, might itself have probably been used by Zechariah in this passage as a simple preposition. It certainly is sometimes used in this manner in the Book of Job: but it is well known that many words, derived from the Arabic, are found in that book, which are not to be found in any other part of the Old Testament; and [y] this perhaps is one of them.

I do not however presume to assert absolutely, that אלי is not so used in any other part of the Old Testa-

guage when St. John wrote his Gospel is uncertain. But, as my argument is not affected by the question, I have not adverted to it.

[x] In Dr. B.'s Notes (p. 64.) את is first said to be "simply the "sign of the accusative case," and afterwards it is classed among the prepositions: but no proof is brought that את and much less אלי, is ever used as a preposition before it.

[y] Be it remembered that I am now speaking of אלי unconnected with any affix.

ment:

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ment: for what information can carry our knowledge of the uſe of *a prepoſition* to ſuch an extent? As far as my own obſervation goes, and as far as I can infer from the citations which are found in ſome of the beſt Lexicons and Concordances, this uſe of it is confined to the Book of Job.

But I will aſſert abſolutely, that it is not ſo uſed in any paſſage of Zechariah. Nor let this be thought to ariſe from hence, that Zechariah ſeldom introduces the ſimple prepoſition, and ſeldom the word which is compounded of that prepoſition and ו the pronominal affix. אל is uſed by him 39 times; and אלי not leſs than 23. אל is uniformly and ſimply rendered "to;" and, in 22 out of 23 times, אלי is rendered by Dr. B. himſelf "to me." The queſtion then is, how ought it to be rendered in the remaining place, or Zech. xii. 10? There appears not the [z] ſhadow of a reaſon, why it ſhould not be rendered here, as it is every where elſe in Zechariah.

Both the Septuagint-interpretation before the introduction of the points, and the points themſelves which were afterwards annexed, demonſtrate, that from the beginning the Jews were convinced it ought in this place to be rendered "to me." Indeed the Jews appear at all times to have been borne down, and ſilenced, by the irreſiſtible force of this conviction. Whatever other attempts they have made to get rid, either of the change of perſon in the words "look upon me" and (thoſe which follow) "mourn for him;" or of the arguments preſſed upon them by Chriſtians, in conſequence of אלי being here tranſlated "to me;" they have never once ventured to propoſe a different tranſlation.

When Dr. B. brings forward the reaſon which I aſſign why the Evangeliſts and Fathers may be ſup-

[z] The only three paſſages, in which I find אלי uſed (as it is here) before את, are Deut. ix. 10. Joſ. x. 22. and 1 Chron. xiii. 12. in all of which it is tranſlated "to me."

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poſed not to cite this paſſage with exactneſs, "be-
"cauſe they often cite the general ſenſe of a paſſage
"without attending to the perſon of whom it is
"ſpoken, when their argument depends not upon
"ſuch attention;" and adds [y] "but here if ever the
"argument does depend upon ſuch attention;" he appears to have entirely miſunderſtood my meaning, as the argument, to which alone I can admit that St. John [z] attended, is not directed to prove that Chriſt is God, but only "that he was pierced." That the difference between St. John's citation and the Bible-Tranſlation may be thus accounted for, and that this method of accounting for it may alſo be ſupported by the examples which I adduce from two other Evangeliſts, I ſtill contend.

The change of perſon in our tranſlation of Zech. xii. 10. was alluded [a] to, when I ſaid De-Roſſi ſuppoſed the Jews to have corrupted the paſſage "from "attention to the analogy of conſtruction:" and I ſhould have ſaid more on the ſubject, had the learned Primate, whoſe tranſlation I was conſidering, mentioned it, even in the ſlighteſt manner, as a reaſon for the alteration which he introduced.

Somewhat might be taken from the harſhneſs with which it ſtrikes the ear, were the verſe to conclude in the Hebrew with דקרו, and in our tranſlation with the words "whom they have pierced." Such a concluſion appears to be adviſable, if not neceſſary; becauſe a different part of the ſame great ſubject is introduced in the words which immediately follow, namely, "the mourning for the Meſſiah;" which is purſued through all the ſubſequent verſes, nor is even an alluſion to his being pierced afterwards found in the chapter.

But this change of perſon, however harſh it may ſound, was known to the Jews; and the very harſh-

[y] App. p. 83.
[a] P. 397.
[z] John xix. 37.

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neſs of it not only proves, that they were convinced the preſent Hebrew text could not be rendered otherwiſe than we have it in our Bible; but alſo that from the beginning they actually found אלי and not אלי in their copies; for doubtleſs they would not deſignedly have introduced a new reading, which muſt deſtroy the uniformity of ſo important a paſſage in their Scriptures. It was known alſo to all the great divines of our Church, and did not alter their opinion concerning the Hebrew text, or our tranſlation of it. And does not Dr. B. himſelf, without the ſanction of any authority, introduce in his explanation of Zech. ii. 8—11. an interchange of ſpeakers, at leaſt as undeſirable in a controverted paſſage of Scripture, as the change of perſon which is here defended by ſo many men of learning.

I ſhall take no notice of the few obſervations, which Dr. Blayney publiſhed in anſwer to this Appendix, except merely to ſtate,—that it is a matter of very much greater conſequence what angel is the ſpeaker in the text, than Dr. B. admits;—that, in p. 83, when he ſays "Dr. E. allows אלי is ſometimes, "though ſeldom uſed, as a ſimple prepoſition," he ought to have ſaid, that I allow this *with regard to the Book of Job ſolely*;—that, when in the ſame page he ſays, that "Dr. E. has not objected to the uſe of אלי before another prepoſition, as את he could not have adverted to my Notes p. 412 and 413. Though I may admit, that אל, *not* אלי, is uſed before certain other prepoſitions, yet את is not one of them; nor will any one who conſiders the meaning of the prepoſitions אל and את readily admit, that they can ever be made to coaleſce ſo as to be uſed together.

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SERMON XII.

IN WHICH IS PROPOSED

A NEW INTERPRETATION

OF THE

LXXXVIIth PSALM.

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SERMON XII.

PSALM lxxxvii. 7.

As well the ſingers as the players on inſtruments ſhall be there: all my ſprings are in thee.

THE Pſalm, of which theſe words form the concluſion, may be juſtly reckoned among the moſt difficult parts of the inſpired writings: for unqueſtionably no part of theſe writings has more engaged the critical ingenuity of tranſlators, paraphraſts, and commentators, nor with leſs ſucceſs. From the days of the Septuagint-tranſlators to the preſent hour, no one, among all the different claſſes of learned expoſitors, appears to have diſcovered for the whole of this Pſalm a clear and ſatisfactory meaning.

The explanations, given of the perſons ſaid in the 4th, 5th, and 6th verſes *to be born*, appear not only to have miſrepreſented thoſe parts of the Pſalm, but alſo to have occaſioned a total inattention to the true meaning of the

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or laſt, verſe, which has juſt been recited to you.

Numberleſs indeed are the ſources, from which ariſe the difficulties attendant on a juſt explanation of that invaluable portion of holy Writ which is contained in the book of Pſalms. They may ariſe from ignorance of the time when, the perſon by whom, or the occaſion on which, the particular compoſition was imparted to the choſen people of God; or, to omit various other ſources, they may ariſe from inattention to thoſe hiſtorical alluſions, which, under different forms, conſtitute the principal ſubſtance of theſe ſacred hymns; and which very often have reſpect to the miraculous interferences, manifeſted of old by God in favour of his people, either to humble their oppreſſors, or to exterminate thoſe wicked nations whoſe lands they were themſelves to poſſeſs and inhabit.

Whether the difficulties, which are to be encountered by the theological critic in the preſent inſtance, ariſe from any one, and particularly from the laſt, of theſe ſources, we ſhall better be enabled to judge, as we proceed with our ſubject.

In doing this, I ſhall FIRST take a view of the Pſalm, as it ſtands in our Engliſh [a] Bible;

[a] The Bible-Verſion has been uſed in all the paſſages cited from the Pſalms in this diſcourſe.

THEN,

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THEN, confining myſelf to the parts which appear to have been improperly rendered, I ſhall aſſign reaſons for a different interpretation of them; and LASTLY, having ſubſtituted this new interpretation, I ſhall repeat the whole Pſalm, and conclude with an obſervation or two upon the important ſubject at large.

1. "His foundation is in the holy moun-
" tains.
2. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion
" more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3. "Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, O
" city of God.
4. "I will make mention of Rahab and Ba-
" bylon to them that know me: behold Phi-
" liſtia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia, this man
" was born there.
5. "And of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, This and
" that man was born in her: and the Higheſt
" himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.
6. "The Lord ſhall count, when he writeth
" up the people, that this man was born
" there.
7. "As well the ſingers as the players on
" inſtruments ſhall be there: all my ſprings
" are in thee."

This Pſalm was evidently written in praiſe of Zion, and, as mention is made in it of Ba-

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bylon, it muſt be ſuppoſed to have been written after the Babyloniſh captivity; probably at no great diſtance from the time when that other pathetic and inimitable compoſition was delivered: [b] "By the rivers of Babylon, there "we ſat down, yea, we wept when we re- "membered Zion."

The ſubjects in praiſe of Zion, on which the Pſalm inſiſts, or rather to which it alludes, (for the whole of it appears to be alluſive,) are the ſelection of Zion by God for the ſeat of his temple, for his ſanctuary or church; and the glory to which it had been advanced by him in the ſight of the ſurrounding nations, who had, in a certain ſenſe, been born in this place, and had been expelled from it to make way for the Jews.

The three firſt verſes are well-tranſlated, and eaſily underſtood, in our Bible. But when, at the concluſion of the fourth verſe, mention is made of the nations, whoſe birth-place Zion had thus been, the miſinterpretation appears to commence. Before however the commencement of this miſinterpretation, the Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking in the firſt perſon, marks himſelf out as a Jew or Iſraelite, and exalts his nation at large, without particular reference to Zion, by introducing the 4th verſe

[b] Pſ. cxxxvii. 1.

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with this declaration: "I will mention Ra-
"hab, *that is* [c] *Egypt*, and Babylon to them
"that know ME,"—an alluſion, than which no ſtronger could be uſed, to recall to the minds of all, who knew the choſen people of God and were acquainted with their hiſtory, the exaltation of this people in the ſight of thoſe great nations; to recall to their minds the wonders performed by Moſes before Pharaoh; and not only the miracles wrought in Babylon by the prophet Daniel, but alſo the victories obtained over the Babylonians by Cyrus, who, by diſmiſſing the Jews without ranſom, acknowledged that theſe victories were obtained by him, through the Almighty aid of that Jehovah, who, long before his birth, called him by his name, ſaying expreſsly of him, "[d] I will go before thee and make the crook-
"ed places ſtraight, that thou mayeſt know,
"that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy
"name, am the God of Iſrael. For Jacob my
"ſervant's ſake, and Iſrael mine elect, I have
"even called thee by thy name."

After this mention of Rahab or Egypt, and Babylon, the Pſalmiſt, reverting immediately to his original ſubject and confining his alluſions to Zion, proceeds, at the concluſion of the 4th verſe, according to the miſinterpreta-

[c] Pſ. lxxxix. 10. Iſ. li. 9.

[d] Iſ. xlv. 2, 3, 4.

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tion (as it appears) of our Bible-verſion, "Be- "hold Philiſtia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia, this "man was born there." Whereas, if Ethiopia be no longer inſerted, as our Bible has it, inſtead of the original word "Cuſh," and perſons be uſed by us for the places inhabited by them, the paſſage ought perhaps to be rendered, "Behold the Philiſtine and Tyrian, with "the Cuſhite," זֶה יֻלַּד שָׁם, "each one of theſe "was born there," that is, in Zion.

Whether the Hebrew words, which I have cited, will bear this meaning, depends ſolely upon the pronoun זֶה, which in our Bible is rendered, "this man."

Unqueſtionably, the pronoun has the vowel-punctuation of the maſculine gender, and is commonly uſed in the ſingular number. It is evident therefore, that it may be rendered, "this man."

But even when it is thus pointed, (if in reality attention is here to be paid to the points,) זֶה is variouſly uſed in conſtruction. It is uſed with a feminine noun in the Book of [e] Joſhua. It is alſo often uſed with plural nouns. In the firſt book of [f] Samuel it is uſed ſeparately in the ſame paſſage with both the Hebrew [g] words which denote "days and

[e] Joſh. ii. 17.
[f] 1 Sam. xxix. 3.
[g] יָמִים and שָׁנִים.

"years,"

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" years," and in each caſe rendered " theſe." And, in the Book of [h] Numbers, it is expreſsly applied at the ſame time to *three* different occurrences, and there alſo " theſe" is the word by which it is rendered. Beſides, in the Septuagint, Vulgate, Ethiopic, and Arabic verſions, זֶה has, in this paſſage, a plural ſenſe given to it. In the ſame ſenſe alſo it is explained by Michaelis in his German tranſlation, " Behold," as he expreſſes it, " the Philiſ-" tines, Tyrians, and Ethiopians were born " there."

But as the verb, with which זֶה is connected, is of the ſingular number, the Hebrew words may perhaps be more properly rendered, as is here propoſed, " each one of theſe " was born there." Nor is this verſion new, or unſupported by critical authority; ſince זֶה is rendered in this paſſage, " Quiſque horum," by a foreign oriental [i] ſcholar of diſtinguiſhed eminence.

Moreover, that theſe Philiſtines, Tyrians, and Ethiopians or Cuſhites, may in a certain ſenſe be ſaid to have been born in Zion, or

[h] Numb. xxii. 28. זֶה שָׁלֹשׁ רְגָלִים " theſe three " times." See alſo זֶה uſed in the ſame manner, Num. xxiv. 10.

[i] John Henry Michaelis, the celebrated father of the great orientaliſt of that name, who has juſt before been mentioned. In Hagiographos, Halæ 1745.

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to have derived their origin from thence, is capable of very ſatisfactory proof.

The inhabitants of Canaan are well known to have been expelled by Joſhua from their original ſettlements in the [i] interior parts of the country adjoining to Zion; and they were alſo driven by him from thence amidſt ſuch alarming [k] diſplays of divine vengeance, as long to make them retain a remembrance of the glory to which Jehovah was at that time pleaſed to raiſe his people. In conſequence of this expulſion, they ruſhed upon the bordering nations, and either forced them to quit their habitations and ſeek for other abodes, (as many northern nations were forced to do in ſubſequent times, and [l] colonies of Phœnicians are ſaid by profane authors to have actually done at this very period,) or they compelled the original inhabitants to admit them to a participation of their territories.

In either of theſe caſes, the expelled Canaanites, though they afterwards took the names of the people, into whoſe countries

[i] Cananæi mediterranea cedere Judæis coacti, cum in terram Canaan illos introduxit Joſhua. Bochart, vol. ii. fol. col. 309.

[k] See Joſhua x. 11.

[l] With Cadmus, &c. See alſo Bochart, vol. ii. col. 309. l. 42.

they

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they fled, might without impropriety be ſaid to have been born in Zion; which was the moſt important place in the country, from which they came; and of which the name, like that of Babylon, might be uſed to denote the country at large of which it was the capital: not to mention the additional importance, which, during the latter part of the Jewiſh hiſtory, was ever attached to Zion, as the city of David.

Doubtleſs, it cannot require any authority from ancient writers, nor any proof from argumentative diſcuſſion, to eſtabliſh the extreme probability, that the towns of Philiſtia, which lay on the ſea-coaſt and immediately to the weſt of Zion, ſhould have been thus occupied by many of theſe fugitive Canaanites.

And that Tyre alſo, which was ſituated on the ſame coaſt to the north of Philiſtia and conſiderably within the borders of [m] ancient Canaan, ſhould in a ſimilar manner have been occupied by them, may be ſhewn to be no leſs worthy of belief. For, that this city was one of the places into which the Canaanites fled to ſave themſelves from Joſhua, muſt be thought exceedingly probable by every one,

[m] Moſes makes Canaan to extend from Zidon to Laſhah. Gen. x. 19.

who

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who conſiders the [n] direction in which the Canaanites were driven after their dreadful overthrow at the waters of Merom, and who admits, that Tyre was founded before that time, and was the city mentioned by that name in the [o] Book of Joſhua.

But even if Tyre was [p] not actually founded, and erected into a city before that time, ſtill it muſt then have been (as [q] Vitringa contends and as its [r] Hebrew name imports,) a ſtrong hold, and a moſt convenient place of refuge. And, beſides, in that caſe alſo we may urge the expreſs and important authority of Bochart, for conſidering it as one of the cities, which were [s] originally founded by thoſe Canaanites, who were driven out by Joſhua, and who afterwards took the name

[n] To great Zidon. Joſh. xi. 28. [o] Joſh. xix. 29.

[p] See Sir John Marſham, Bp. Patrick, &c. Joſephus ſays (Hudſon's Ed. p. 341.) that Tyre was founded 240 years only before the building of Solomon's temple; and on this occaſion he muſt mean Old Tyre, or that on the continent: for had New Tyre, which was built in an iſland, been founded ſo many years before the days of Homer, it would very probably have been mentioned by him.

[q] See the "Obſervationes ſacræ" of Campegius Vitringa, book i. chap. 1.

[r] צֹר.

[s] See Bochart, vol. ii. col. 309. l. 33.

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of [t] Phœnicians, "propter anathema contor-
"tum in patrem ſuum Canaan, maxime cum
"viderunt a Judæis ſe bello peti interne-
"cino."

At all events therefore, the Tyrians, or at leaſt a very conſiderable part of them, may be ſaid to have originated in, or near, Zion; and long muſt their deſcendants have retained a traditional remembrance of the dreadful overthrow, which compelled their anceſtors to leave with ſuch precipitance the place where they were born, and to ſeek for a new habitation.

It hath been already noticed, that the word, in the Pſalm under our conſideration, which our Bible renders "Ethiopia," is in the original language כּוּשׁ. In our old verſion it is rendered "Morians." But certainly the original term ought to have been retained in both verſions. Of the Cuſhites there were (as is [u] generally agreed) three different nations: one was ſettled in Africa: another on the eaſt ſide of the river Euphrates, and near its

[t] See Bochart, vol. ii. col. 301. l. 44. Thus Shaul is ſaid in one paſſage of the Septuagint (Gen. xlvi. 10.) to be the ſon of a Canaanitiſh, and in another (Exod. vi. 15.) of a Phœnician woman. And Canaan in Hebrew is actually rendered "the land of the Phœnicians" in the Septuagint. Joſh. v. 12.

[u] See Bryant and Wells, no leſs than Bochart.

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mouth: and the third, or thoſe with whom we are here concerned, inhabited the country immediately ſouth of Judæa, and between that kingdom and Egypt. That the country thus inhabited by them was the boundary of Egypt on the ſide oppoſite to Syene, or on the ſame ſide with Judæa, muſt be inferred from that paſſage of [u]Ezekiel, in which Jehovah ſays, "I will make the land of Egypt utterly waſte "and deſolate, from the tower of Syene even "unto the border of Ethiopia, or Cuſh."— When alſo Iſaiah denounces, "[x]Wo to the "land ſhadowing with wings, which is beyond "Cuſh, or Ethiopia," how can the Prophet, as is generally agreed, mean Egypt on this occaſion, unleſs the inhabitants of the country between that kingdom and Judæa were Cuſhites?—Beſides, certain Arabians are not only ſaid to have been ſituated [y]near theſe Cuſhites, but alſo Bochart contends at [z]large, that theſe Arabians and Cuſhites were one and the ſame people. And ſo immediately adjoining to the ſouthern borders of Judæa was the habitation aſſigned to the former, that the town of

[u] Ezek. xxix. 10. [x] If. xviii. 1.

[y] 2 Chron. xxi. 16.—Bochart adverts to this paſſage, vol. ii. col. 211. l. 74.

[z] See Bochart, vol. ii. col. 209. l. 45. and col. 212. l. 60. but rather ſee the whole of book iv. chap 2.

Eluſa,

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[a]Eluſa, which belongs to Paleſtine, was formerly conſidered as a part of Arabia; and, what applies moſt directly to our ſubject, the town itſelf is moreover actually ſaid by [b]Bochart to have been built by Canaanites, who fled thither to eſcape from the Jews. There can be no doubt therefore, that the Cuſhites mentioned in our Pſalm lived ſo near to the Canaanites, that many among thoſe of the latter people, who were expelled by Joſhua, may, with the higheſt degree of probability, be ſuppoſed to have taken refuge in their cities.

We may ſafely therefore aſſert of Tyre and Cuſh, what is aſſerted of them by different [c]commentators, that they lay north and ſouth of Jeruſalem, whilſt Philiſtia is well known to be ſituated on the weſt of it. And with no leſs ſafety may we aſſert alſo, that theſe nations, or at leaſt a very great number of their inhabitants, were driven from their birth-place in, or near, Zion, by Joſhua, who advanced from the eaſt upon them, and forced them to eſcape for their lives in theſe three different directions.

[a] "Ea civitas eſt nunc Paleſtinæ, quondam Arabiæ, "teſte Stephano." See Jerome's works, Schol. in vita Hilarionis, vol. i. p. 254. Ed. Baſil. 1565.

[b] Bochart, vol. ii. col. 308. l. 20.

[c] See Poole's Annotations.

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[d]Moſes informs us, with regard to the route by which he had been commanded to conduct the Jews, that God "led them not through "the way of the land of the Philiſtines, "though that was near; but God led the peo-"ple about." In the ſame manner, Joſhua was commanded to lead them from the eaſt through Jordan to attack the Canaanites.

Nor can it be doubted, that the mention, made in the inſpired writings, of the birth of theſe nations in Zion, muſt have redounded to her glory; not ſimply, as ſhe was the mother of them, but alſo, as the very alluſion to this circumſtance was calculated to excite a recollection of their having been driven from their original habitations, in conſequence, not of their ſins only, but alſo of the adoption of Zion by Jehovah for his own reſidence.

Beſides, alluſions of the ſame kind, with thoſe for which I am here contending, occur not unfrequently in other parts of the ſame inſpired compoſitions. Though, as theſe parts were written before the Babyloniſh captivity, we can expect no alluſion in them to the Jewiſh hiſtory, as connected with Babylon.

The ſelection of the tribe, to which mount Zion belonged, for the depoſitary of the true religion, and the miraculous interpoſition, by

[d] Exod. xiii. 17.

which

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which the Iſraelites in general were delivered from Egyptian ſlavery and were led to poſſeſs the land of Canaan, are not leſs evidently pointed out by alluſion in the 114th Pſalm, than in that which is now more immediately under our conſideration. "When Iſrael went "out of Egypt, the houſe of Jacob from a "people of a ſtrange language, Judah was his "ſanctuary and Iſrael his dominion. The "ſea," that is, the red ſea, "ſaw that and fled; "Jordan was driven back."—Here Judah, the ſanctuary of God, is united with the miracles both of Moſes and Joſhua; and alluſion is evidently made to the very ſame parts of Jewiſh hiſtory, which are ſuppoſed to be alluded to in the Pſalm from which my text is taken.

At the ſame time explicit declarations on theſe ſubjects are not wanting in others among the ſame inſpired compoſitions.

In the 135th Pſalm, thoſe who ſtand in the courts of the Lord are called upon to praiſe him: "Becauſe he had ſent tokens and won-"ders into the midſt of Egypt, upon Pharaoh "and upon all his ſervants:"—and "becauſe he "had ſmitten great nations, and ſlain mighty "kings, Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og "the king of Baſan, and all the kingdoms of "Canaan; and given their land for an heritage, "even for an heritage to Iſrael his people."

In other parts alſo of the ſame inſpired

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compoſitions ſtill fuller mention is made of the great circumſtances, to which our Pſalm is ſuppoſed to allude. "The marvellous "things, which the Almighty did in the land "of Egypt, in the field of Zoan"—"the "caſting out of the heathen before his peo-"ple"—"the dividing of an inheritance for "them"—and "the chooſing of the tribe of "Judah, and mount Zion, which he loved, "and in which he built a ſanctuary"—all theſe, amidſt many other ſuch circumſtances, are moſt explicitly ſet forth, and declared, in the 78th Pſalm.

It being then the preſumed ſenſe of the latter part of the 4th verſe of our Pſalm, "that "the Philiſtines, Tyrians, and Cuſhites derived "their origin from Zion, or the country "which ſurrounded it;" the 5th verſe forcibly confirms this ſenſe, and may be thus rendered: [e] "Accordingly, of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, "that all theſe different men," אִישׁ וְאִישׁ, "were born in her: and the Higheſt himſelf "ſhall eſtabliſh her." And this rendering of the redoubled word אִישׁ comes recommended by its conſiſtency with the genius of the [f] He-

[e] The Hebrew conjunction ו may unqueſtionably be rendered, "accordingly."

[f] Nomen ſubſtantivum ſæpe geminatur, ut ſignificetur univerſitas, ſingula ejuſdem generis comprehendens; ut אִישׁ אִישׁ vir, vir, unuſquiſque vir, nemine excepto. To which

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brew language, and by the connection, or rather identity, which is eſtabliſhed between the perſons mentioned in the 4th, and thoſe mentioned in the 5th verſe, through the renewed mention of the former which is immediately ſubjoined. For the Pſalmiſt reverts immediately in the 6th verſe to his declaration concerning them; and, agreeably to what is ſaid in the Book of [g] Deuteronomy with regard to the diviſion made by God to the nations of their inheritance, aſſerts, that "the Lord ſhall "count, when he regiſters the nations, that "each one of theſe was born there;" concluding the aſſertion with preciſely the ſame words which were uſed before in the 4th verſe, and which I have above cited, זֶה יֻלַּד שָׁם.

The explanations of theſe three verſes, which have commonly been given by ſuch [h] learned men, as make זֶה apply, not to any perſon, or thing, expreſsly mentioned in them, but to ſome external and illuſtrious individual, are doubtleſs forced, and ſuggeſted by the miſinterpretation, which our Bible and old tranſlation, no leſs than various other tranſlations, give of theſe verſes. Nor is the con-

which is alſo added, עִיר וָעִיר urbs et urbs, i. e. omnes et ſingulæ urbes. Ezra x. 14. Schroder's Heb. Grammar, p. 226.

g Deut. xxii. 8. See alſo Acts xvii. 26.

h See Hammond, and alſo Patrick on the Pſalms.

ſequent

ſequent part of ſuch explanations, that one ſuch perſon only was born in the heathen countries there mentioned, whilſt many were born in Zion, conſiſtent, in any reſpect, with an enlarged and comprehenſive view of the hiſtorical ſubjects commonly introduced in theſe parts of the inſpired writings. Moreover, what ought to be thought moſt important, if not deciſive, on the ſubject, the perſons, ſaid in this Pſalm to be regiſtered, are nations, and not [i] individuals, ſuch as זֶה, if rendered this man, muſt indicate.

The laſt verſe, or the paſſage itſelf with which I introduced the ſubject, is certainly not leſs miſinterpreted, than any of thoſe verſes which precede it. The former part of it is rendered, in our old verſion, "the ſingers alſo, and "trumpeters, ſhall he rehearſe;" and in the Bible-verſion, "as well the ſingers, as the play-"ers on inſtruments, ſhall be there." Indeed all the old verſions appear to conſider the Hebrew words, וְשָׁרִים כְּחֹלְלִים, as declaratory, in

[i] Even if it could have been intended to declare in the 4th verſe, as commentators ſuppoſe, that "this man, or "ſome one great man only," was born in Philiſtia, Tyre, and Cuſh; it by no means appears, that there would have been ſufficient importance in the declaration to account for the ſolemn repetition made of it in the 6th verſe, whilſt no new mention whatever is made of thoſe more numerous perſons of note, who, according even to this ſuppoſition, are ſaid to have been born in Zion.

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ſome way or other, of gladneſs and rejoicing. Dr. [k]Kennicott, notwithſtanding, aware that much ſtreſs is not to be laid on the points which are uſed in the Hebrew language to diſtinguiſh the ſound of letters, and that the word שָׂרִים may have the point differently placed on the firſt letter, and be rendered, as the Syriac Verſion has actually rendered it, "princes;" and thinking alſo that כְּחֹלִים has been corrupted by an inſertion of the ſecond ל, and beſides, that it ought to be divided into two parts, כְּחֹל יָם, renders the clauſe, "The "princes ſhall be as the ſand of the ſea."

In reality however, the words, as they now ſtand, may, in direct and full confirmation of the meaning above aſcribed to the preceding verſes, be rendered, "But princes are as ſlain "men;" that is, but all the glory, which can be derived from princes, or the moſt illuſtrious perſons connected with Zion, is as nothing.

Why the Hebrew conjunction ו, which I render "But," appears to be paſſed over unnoticed in our own and other Verſions, I ſhall not inquire; it is ſufficient for my purpoſe, that it makes part of the Hebrew text, and may undoubtedly be rendered, "But." That שָׂרִים alſo may be rendered "princes," has juſt been declared. And that חללים, conſidered

[k] See Dr. Kennicott's poſthumous works.

without

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without points, is properly rendered [l] "ſlain," appears from the very next Pſalm, at the 5th verſe of which it occurs, under the ſame form of conſtruction, and with the ſame particle of compariſon before it, as in the preſent caſe, except that the paragogic מוֹ is added, and, what is of very little conſequence, the points are ſomewhat varied, כְּמוֹ חֲלָלִים inſtead of כְּחֲלָלִים; and there the paſſage is expreſsly rendered in our Bible, "like the ſlain."

The laſt verſe then, after thus aſſerting, "But princes are as ſlain men," concludes, "all my ſprings, or all my hopes, are in thee;" that is, in Zion, as the ſanctuary of God, the holy church, the only ſeat of true religion: moſt agreeably to what the Pſalmiſt ſays on another occaſion, [m] "Put not your truſt in "princes, nor in the ſon of man, in whom "there is no help. His breath goeth forth, "he returneth to the earth."—"Happy is he, "who hath the God of Jacob for his help: "whoſe hope is in the Lord his God."

[l] It may perhaps be thought worthy of obſervation, that it is a participle of the verb חָלַל, which is uſed when Iſaiah is ſpeaking of the victory, which the arm of Jehovah had obtained for his people over Rahab, or the Dragon, that is, over Egypt: "Art thou not it that hath "cut Rahab, and מְחֹלֶלֶת, wounded, or ſlain, the Dra-"gon?"

[m] Pſ. cxlvi.

Accord-

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Accordingly, our whole Pſalm may be thus rendered.

1. His [n]foundation is in the holy mountains.

2. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3. Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, O city of God.

4. I will mention Egypt and Babylon to them that know [o]ME; behold the Philiſtine, and the Tyrian, with the Cuſhite; each one of theſe was born [p]there.

5. Accordingly, of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, That all theſe different men were born in her: and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.

6. The Lord ſhall count, when he regiſters the nations, that each one of theſe was born there.

7. But, [q]princes are as [r]ſlain men: all my ſprings are in [s]thee.

[n] Or that of his temple. See Poole's Annotations.

[o] As a Jew or Iſraelite in general.

[p] That is, in Zion.

[q] That is, the moſt illuſtrious perſons connected with Zion.

[r] As dead or unprofitable men.

[s] In Zion, as the ſanctuary of God, &c. See the preceding page.

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The interpretation here given of this Pſalm is not derived from the aſſiſtance of any conjecture, any new reading, nor indeed of any alteration whatever of the original text. By giving to the pronoun הוּא a meaning, which, independently of ſimilar acceptations of it in other paſſages of the Old Teſtament, is juſtified by ancient verſions, no leſs than modern commentators; by conſidering the birth of perſons in Zion, as alluſive not merely to their origin, but alſo to the wonderful manner in which they were expelled from their birth-place by Joſhua; and by explaining the firſt words of the laſt verſe in a ſenſe, which, when propoſed, every man, who is in any degree acquainted with the original language, muſt at leaſt confeſs may properly be affixed to them; the whole difference of interpretation has been produced.

Whether the interpretation here given be in itſelf clear and ſatisfactory, and much more whether it be the true one, muſt be left to the deciſion of others. Where ſo many learned men have failed, there muſt be great difficulties, and perfect ſatisfaction is ſcarcely to be expected. The ſenſe, now aſcribed to this Pſalm, is doubtleſs conſiſtent with what we find expreſſed in various other Pſalms. This is evident even from the paſſages in theſe writings

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writings to which I have above appealed, on account of the allusions and declarations contained in them.

It may perhaps also be justly assumed, that what has been here proposed is both calculated to do away, as far as it extends, those scoffs of infidels, which arise from apparent inconsistencies, or from want of perspicuity, in the holy Scriptures; and, at the same time, to enforce on the pious and devout reader that admiration of the wonderful dispensations of the Almighty, and that confidence in him and the church he has founded among men, which must raise us far above all human dependencies, and excite in us a portion of the same holy ardour in the worship of God with that which formed so distinguished and so acceptable a part of the great Psalmist's character.

In no part of the sacred volume does there shine forth more fervent piety, and zeal for the honour of God and for his church, than in the Book of Psalms. Happy indeed would it be for us, were we to apply all, that we indisputably understand of these admirable compositions, to excite the same piety and the same zeal in ourselves.

Such conduct however would doubtless not draw us off from attempting to understand still more and more of their invaluable contents.

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tents. It would in reality produce the contrary effect; it would make us not reſt ſatisfied till we had explored, as far as our means and abilities extend, the true ſenſe and intention of whatever the Almighty has been thus pleaſed to impart to us, that we may apply the whole to the infinitely important purpoſes for which it was imparted.

With ſuch views may all our inveſtigations of the true ſenſe and intention of Scripture at all times be conducted; and, whatever in other reſpects may be the ſucceſs of our labour, we ſhall then be enabled to aſſure ourſelves, that we ſhall obtain by it the favour of that great Being, on whom our ultimate and beſt ſucceſs, both in this world and the next, muſt without doubt ſolely and eternally depend!

THE END.

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